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Hand of Bronze

Hand of Bronze

By BURRIS JENKINS



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It may be needless to say that the characters in this book are composite pictures, not attempted photographs of individuals. Traits and incidents from widely different persons and places have merged into the characters and situations which go to make up this narrative about the existing American scene. Seminole is no one city.

BURRIS JENKINS

LOGAN'S HAVEN, NIPIGON,

ONTARIO, CANADA,

August 22, 1933.

Chris

The city of Seminole is so named because none of the Seminole tribe ever lived in that part of the country. Cherokees, Comanches, Osages, Pawnees, and Shawnees, oh, yes, plenty of them; but names of things near at hand never convey enough glamour for us. Those who laid the foundations of Seminole must needs go clean down into Florida for a romantic title to send to the postoffice department at Washington for designation of their frontier settlement.

Frontier no longer. By no means. The frontiers all gone, nearly a million persons now work their ways in the city of Seminole—not like a prairie dog town, too scattered and too small, but like a huge hill of ants. They run and counter-run, nearly a million ways at once, over the cliffs and valleys where the city sprawls. These denizens of Seminole love to talk of their town and country as the nerve-center of America, the geographical and ethnological backbone of the continent, which means to them of course the center of the universe. Does not the place where each of us exists mark the center of the cosmos for him?

The Seminole Daily Sentinel is so named not because it ever kept watch and ward over the welfare of the people of Seminole, but because, according to current commercial public opinion and that of the most enlightened intelligentsia, it guarded the interests of its founder and owner, Bill Bronze, day in, day out, year in, year out, world without end. To be sure it sought to bring new industries to

town, new federal buildings, new railroads, and terminals; to be sure the Sentinel beat the snare drum, a whole battery of snare drums, and blew trumpets, too, and trombones and tubas for the Chamber of Commerce, the Merchants Association, and all the promotional clubs and combinations; but ever with an eye to the steady stream of fluid precious metals that poured into the depositories of big Bill Bronze. New streets and pavings, better parks and boulevards, for the beautification of Seminole and the delight and cultivation of its people,—yes, yes, the big bass drum for all of these; but the benefit district, assessed for heavy taxes to pay for these developments, always stopped short of the Sentinel property and, indeed, of all other properties in which Bill Bronze held interest. And in fact, in what important properties did he not hold interest? Skilful juggling it took, to block out benefit districts and adjust taxation so as to barely miss Bill Bronze and hit everybody else; but then Bill Bronze—nothing if not adroit. And powerful, too, big Bill! One of the triumvirate that bossed Seminole, and one of the fifty-three or sixty-seven always named as real rulers of our pleasant land—railroad director, oil magnate, mining expert and owner, banker, and backer of both major political parties.

Bill Bronze read every line that went into his paper, ads and all, both before and after publication. He knew personally every man of the three hundred or so who put their brain and brawn into the production of his manufactured article. He knew the exact hour, yes, minute, when they entered the building and went to work, and when they left. Else what was that little cubicle for over the entrance? And that spy-hole covering the sidewalk in front? And that sharp-eyed young Jew with the big horn-rimmed glasses which he never needed except upon Sentinel duty? Bill

Bronze knew every cub that came to him, green from the schools of journalism at the state universities, schools of journalism which Bill hated and at the mention of which he snorted, but whose spawn he had to take if he were to get reporters from anywhere at all, since all the unlicked cubs felt it a bounden duty to go to the schools for a while. 'The Sentinel is the best school in the world—the University in the Alley,' Bill would declare, with much justification for his dogmatism.



Of course he knew Chris Weld, did Bill Bronze. Chris had toiled two years on the city staff of the Sentinel, and had earned a by-line as much as a dozen times—that is, been allowed to put his name to a big story—until Bill had summoned the city editor and called him down for spoiling his men with too much publicity. Generally off between five and six in the afternoon, since he belonged to the day shift which got out the afternoon paper, Christopher Weld nevertheless, on this November evening, walked toward the Sentinel office at seven o'clock. He had an interest in the election returns. His paper had gone for Harding, but his father had stood for Cox. Chris, torn between the two, unable to make up his own mind which way salvation for the country probably lay, did not walk with springy and eager step, but rather slowly for him, not to say lethargically, hands behind him, and head bowed in thoughtfulness.

He believed intensely in his father. Peter Weld always turned out to be right in the long run, though forever in the minority. 'I wouldn't know what it would be like to be in the majority,' he often said, and smiled with that soft, philosophical smile which carried just a touch of pathos, almost sadness. And was not Peter impractical? Why, he

believed in idealism, socialization of industry and internationalism, in forgiveness of debts, and all such moonshine. Chris could not but yield a few steps to his father's impossible aspirations, recognize the beauty of the iridescent dreams, because he had forever felt the gentleness of his father's touch upon his life; but 'Great Scott,' as the Sentinel kept saying, 'We've got to keep our feet on the ground and our heads out of the clouds. Europe and her quarrels and her prosperity or adversity are no concern of ours. We've already had our fingers burned in the world war. Let's get our feet once and forever out of the mud of France and never get back. Never again! Let the other nations paddle their own canoes, stew in their own juice. Let's attend to our own business. Let's get back to normalcy. Hurray for American isolation, the Monroe Doctrine, and Warren G. Harding!' Between these two powerful streams of influence in his thought, Peter Weld on one side and Bill Bronze on the other, no wonder young Chris could scarcely decide which way to let his little bark drift.

He had voted, his first vote, this morning for Harding; but a sense of guilt, of selfishness, spoiled his elation at his brand new citizenship. At dinner that evening Peter had not asked him which way his ballot had gone, nor had Chris volunteered the information. Penny had asked him, but he could ignore the question of a sister only fifteen, and he had determinedly snubbed her. Now, as he walked, he felt remorse about that, and knew that his father understood as plainly as if his son had shouted at the door of the house to all concerned, 'I cast my first vote for Harding, and normalcy, and isolation!'

Furthermore, on that twilight expedition back toward the Sentinel office, Chris fretted somewhat at the thought of mixed motives, the desire to stand well with Bill Bronze,

to promote the policy of the Big Boss, to play the game of the great machine. Did he not dimly hope that Bill Bronze might relent in the, to Chris, unreasonable obstacles constantly erected these two years between Chris and Jane Bronze? Ever since Chris had come home from Harvard, with his degree in his pocket, after a shortened course prepared for officers, and found Jane grown into such dainty and piquant little dark womanhood, had he not gone completely mad about her? Of course he did not belong in the gilt-edged crowd, except on sufferance. He knew well that only Harvard, his air service, and perhaps his own personality gained him a fringed entrance to the Junior League coterie. Nevertheless, did brains and culture count for nothing in this republic? he desperately asked of the mild November air. He knew he had brains. Got them from his father. He knew he had the rudiments of culture. He read a lot. Besides, he began dimly to realize that to talk to his father hours on end, as he could now do, constituted a liberal education. Jane seemed perfectly willing to marry Chris and live simply with him. And then, what were the Boss's millions for, anyhow? Chris did not even blush or turn a hair at the thought that old Bronze ought to manifest willingness to contribute to daughter and son-in-law, even if she was only a step-daughter. The romantic idealism that would hesitate over Jane's millions did not belong in the real world of Chris Weld. He offered her clean, healthy manhood, a clear head and a devoted heart. Money did not count when weighed in the balances with these attributes. He felt no shame or hesitation as he contemplated marriage with Jane and her inheritance. How could he, with his father's constant philosophizing about money and its just convenience but its essential dispensability?

Yet, so Jane had told him often, Bill Bronze did not ob-

ject to Chris any more than he did to any other man who had crossed Jane's path. Bill went gunning for them all. Several had made determined efforts before Chris had come along; but no use! Bill had run them all off the premises. What was it? Could the Chief believe in no man? Suspicious of the motives of all? Did he believe them fortune hunters all? Or was it a case of father-daughter fixation, not impossible between step-father and step-daughter. Any-way, here's hoping the election may go to suit the Old Man. Just barely possible success might mellow his mood.

* * *

‘Hello, Chris, wait a minute!’ a voice called from the second story of an apartment house. Chris waited. Down the stairs came rushing a tall, shock-headed, lean; bespectacled figure of nearly thirty in shirt sleeves. The blue shirt showed clean enough and fine enough, as did the brown waistcoat and trousers, and the well polished brown shoes. The countenance revealed more wrinkles than thirty would justify.

‘Hello, John, what's matter?’

‘Nothing particular. Going back to the office? Election returns?’

‘You guessed it. Get your coat and come on.’

‘Can't. The baby's sick. Reckon the Old Man'll be there?’

‘I don't know, I'm sure. Why, do you want to send a message?’

‘Hell, no.’ Fright came into the face under the wrinkled, nervous forehead. ‘He was in a hell of a rage this morning at conference. Acted like a man with the d.t.'s. We'd fallen down about six columns in display, as compared with this date a year ago. He blew every ad man out of the water; I

don't know why he landed on me in particular. He gives me the jitters. If I lost my job — wife and kids!' The man's speech grew thick.

'Oh, well, you know how to take him, don't you? You ought to, after all these years.'

'I wish I could look at it that way, but he gets my goat every time. I s'pose I'm too thin-skinned. God, I cringe like a whipped hound. He's taking all the manhood out of me. I used to look the world in the face, and tell any damn man to go to hell. But I sit there and take it like a cur, while he abuses every one of us, like a nigger-driver. I wish I knew where I could get a job with some other paper, further west.' Prather jerked his head in an indefinite direction. 'How I hate him! How everybody hates him.'

'Hush up, John. You oughtn't to talk like that.'

'We all talk like that, those that have anything to do with him —' John Prather, classified advertising manager, had once fought a battle in public school in behalf of little Chris Weld, had taken a keen personal interest in Chris ever since old Peter Weld's son had come as a cub to the Sentinel, often took a hole-in-the-wall lunch with Chris, and spent a good deal of the time lauding the writings of Peter Weld.

'Aren't you afraid —' began Chris.

'Course I'm afraid. Fear hangs over us all, day and night. I wake up in the night sweating with fear and gnawing the bed clothes.'

'You say Mrs. Prather is ill?'

'No, the baby.'

'I hope not very sick.'

'Just flu. I don't know how bad it is yet.'

'What I mean is, aren't you afraid to cuss out the Old Man to any passer-by? I might be his bosom friend, for all you

know.' He might be my father-in-law, some day, thought Chris and grinned a sort of limestone grin.

'He hasn't a friend on earth!' John Prather actually spat his loathing out on the sidewalk and ground his foot upon it.

'Here, pull yourself together. You've just got a nervous fit. You might know it's just his line. Thinks it's the way to pep you fellows up. He's a great executive.'

'If that's the way to handle men, then I don't know the first thing about human nature. Fear, fear, fear! Nothing but abject fear in those morning conferences of department heads. Can any man do his best work when he's shaking with fear? Can he? Now I leave it to you!'

'No, of course not. But just why did you pick out me to tell all this to?'

'Damned if I know. I just saw you passing. And I just had to talk to somebody or bust. I've already talked too much to Ann. Poor girl, I scare the gizzard out of her, when I let loose. I even scare the kids. But I'd explode if I didn't let it out to somebody. And you've always seemed to me like a decent sort — and your old man, too. Say, I wish I knew him. I read everything I can lay hands on that he writes. Wish you'd always tip me off when a new piece is coming in any magazine.'

'Thanks a lot. I'll be glad to. Why don't you come out and see Dad sometime—'

'Gosh, d'you think he'd see me?'

'Sure.'

'Honest?'

'Why, yes, why not? Dad always takes it as a compliment when any young chap comes to see him.'

'You don't mean it? I'll sure go. And thanks for that "young chap"! I feel an octogenarian.'

'Oh, buck up! You'll be okay in the morning. Harding

will win, the Old Man will be happy, and — all that's the matter with you is the baby's sick. S'long, John!"

"Hope you're right, but you're not. I wish the Boss were dead. S'long."

* * *

Chris walked on, disturbed. Familiar enough with the estimate placed by most of the working force upon Bill Bronze and his hardness, the aspirant for a place in the Boss's household could not but feel dashed by the hysterical fear of John Prather. A quake shook the breast of Christopher Weld. His hope of conquest sank. What chance had he — in his twenty-fourth year, a mere reporter at thirty-five a week, scarcely able to clothe himself decently and pay nominal board to his father as he felt in honor bound to do — what chance had he with one of the fifty or sixty big shots who bossed city, state, and nation?

He saw his reflection in the plate glass of a corner grocery just closing for the night. Without pausing, he noted the fresh crease of his gray flannel trousers, the loose but well tailored brown Norfolk jacket — the day had been almost as warm as summer — the soft white shirt and blue tie with the collar held at perfect adjustment by the gold bar pin, the brown crush hat which he knew covered brown hair which waved, not curled, above a high forehead seated over brows bulging sufficiently to indicate good mental machinery. The chin? Not so hot. Chris never felt content that his chin stuck out strong enough to take it. He felt fairly pleased with the five feet eleven, one hundred and sixty-five pound figure that walked beside him past the plate glass, all but the chin. Now that burst of dust! Coal dust at that! What the —

There stood a Sentinel coal wagon unloading half a ton

of bituminous with a great ringing of the steel scoop, upon the steel body of the truck. The Negro driver, singing lustily a cotton field spiritual, rollicking in rhythm, heaved the coal out upon the sidewalk in front of a little one-story drab wooden house. The proprietor of the humble establishment, in a dirty woolen undershirt and blue denim overalls, bent over the pile shovelling the coal with a narrow spade into a broken and leaky bushel basket. Christopher Weld hastily stepped out into the street, to circle round the black cloud; but the blue denims hailed him and, dropping the spade, ran out into the middle of the street after him.

‘Hey, dere, you’re from de Sentinel, aind it? I saw you vonce at de turnverein before—before de prohibition got so bad. You wrote dings aboud mine Heinrich in der tumbling. Aind it?’

‘Yes, yes, I remember.’

‘Yah! Ah, Der Sentinel! Eet is ein grand paper! Eet helps all us poor people get de coal for de vinter-time. Und so jeep! Jeeper dan ve could get midout.’ The householder’s round face exuded perspiration, gratitude, and sociability long frustrated.

‘Yes, yes. Quite so, quite so!’ Chris tried to walk on.

‘Yes, and when is the Sentinel going into the grocery business, that’s what I want to know?’ cut in a voice behind Chris, with the burr and nasal ring of a buzz-saw. Turning, the young reporter saw approaching behind him a figure like Uncle Sam without chin whiskers; doubtless the grocery man from the corner, clad in soiled and shiny black, with an old derby on his head. ‘Your smallpox paper has cut into the coal trade, underselling legitimate dealers.’

‘Middle-men—’ Chris could not stem the torrent of the angry, lean fellow.

‘Middle-men! What do you call middle-men? Every legitimate tradesman, eh? Yes, you want the big fellows to grab everything. Chain stores! I can’t compete with ‘em. I’m a middle-man, am I? All my life in a decent grocery business, and now the A.B.X.Y.Z. chains are driving me to the wall. The wall! I tell you. Know what the wall means? Mexico and Russia have showed us! You stand up against a wall to be shot. Well, the chains are shooting me. I’m as good as dead already.’

‘But what has that to do with the Sentinel’s coal business?’ Chris tried honestly to follow the man’s train of thought. Did not his father say you must always try to put yourself at the other man’s point of view? And that any man was worth understanding?

‘Just this! The Sentinel is playing the big socialistic racket! Direct from producer to consumer, eh? You own your mines, you own your paper for publicity, and you convey your coal direct to the consumer and eliminate the middle-man! What right has a newspaper to go into the coal business? Might as well go into gents’ furnishing goods, or into the grocery business. When will you be selling groceries? Your paper wants to grab everything in sight. Now these chain stores—’ Chris evidently had caught an electric eel, or it had caught him.

‘Yah,’ broke in the ‘Dutchman,’ ‘but ve people get our coal jeep. And the X.Y.Z. sell us our groceries jeep! Gott im himmel! Times is hard. Ve must buy jeep!’

‘Yes, and you get cheap groceries. Just what you pay for. No more and no better!’

‘The trend is toward socialization—’ ventured Chris.

‘Yes!’ Raucously the buzz-saw rang. ‘Socialism! You’d drive out the middle-man. You’d reduce us all to cogs in a

big machine, with just a few big boys like your blackmailing boss running us!'

Anyway, the man had courage. That Chris would allow. Not many little fellows in Seminole dared assail Bill Bronze; and even the big ones dared it only in whispers to one another. More than that, the groceryman evidently knew more than onions. He'd been talking to some of the coal dealers, without a doubt.



Extricating himself at last, the reporter continued his enlightening stroll. After all, no hurry. The returns would not come in strong before nine or ten. Meantime, did any home or family exist into which the long fingers of Bill Bronze did not reach, not often for weal, nearly always for woe?

Mrs. Hodgkins came next. Christopher Weld had written the story of her daughter's divorce. He blushed when he thought of that interview nearly two years ago. The daughter in bed, hysterical and prostrated; himself sitting beside her putting the thumb screws to her. 'You'll have to talk, Mrs. Divers. The *Sentinel* is going to print a story. I've got to write it. Do you want a straight story? Or do you want it twisted?' The girl twisted—and then talked. Would he do it again? He supposed so, for he would have to. Bill Bronze's big hand shoved him. He had done lots of things like that.

Mrs. Hodgkins stood in front of a picture theater waiting for her sedan to be sent round from the garage. She recognized Chris and bowed pleasantly. She had seen him often, since that inquisition, but he had always managed to dodge. Now she stopped him in the glare of the electrified entrance, and began at once about her daughter, as if she had long

waited the chance. Oh, yes, married again, and this time so happily; yes, a wee sweet baby; some trouble with its food, they'd tried goat's milk, and Dellin's food, Kap's Baby Soup, strained vegetables—now they had a wet nurse. Yes, could you conceive it? An Irishwoman with milk enough for an orphanage. No, she felt sure, did Mrs. Hodgkins, that character could not be imbibed with milk. Still the nurse was a good woman, you know, but— Yes, her daughter was going out again. Quite gay, in fact. Just now she was preparing to go to Linden Springs, ostensibly for her health, but in reality for the gay season. Wouldn't the Sentinel be interested in that? Really it was a news item, she felt sure. Mrs. Hodgkins herself had been put on a diet. Chris wondered for a moment if that, too, were news! And Mr. Hodgkins, he had been taken off of sugar. She herself could eat no meat, but vegetables, especially cabbage, boiled cabbage. She had really become quite fond of it. You can get used to anything. Chris ventured that most beautiful women adored boiled cabbage, but wouldn't admit it. He'd read or heard that somewhere. Mrs. Hodgkins beamed and exclaimed, 'Naughty boy! Flatterer!'

'No, I mean it!' Chris felt his face flush.

'How is Mr. Bronze? Dear Mr. Bronze? You know my new son-in-law is an employee of Mr. Bronze? Or was. He's an engineer, you know—' Chris didn't. 'He had charge of the gas plant. Mr. Bronze is somehow interested. It was no fault of my son-in-law that he quit. Only for some reason the dividends on gas had fallen off a little—oh, ever so little. Somebody thought it was my dear Percy's fault, and he resigned. No, no, he wasn't laid off, he resigned. It seems Mr. Bronze knew the resignation was coming and felt very bad about it—or badly—I always forget which it is. And one should be so careful of

grammar when talking to you literary men. Now Mr. Bronze—'

‘I rarely see him except at a distance. Almost never talk to him.’

‘Oh, just imagine. Why I thought you talked to him hours—’

‘No, it doesn’t take long to say “Damn.”’

‘What! Do you say that to him?’

‘No. He has occasionally, at rare intervals, condescended to say it to me.’

‘You don’t mean it! How interesting!’

‘Yes. It usually captures my wandering attention.’

‘But Percy, now, as I was saying when something threw me off—’

Any one must be muscular indeed to throw her off, thought Chris. Let’s see. She must weigh—one-sixty-five, one-seventy-five.

‘Oh, yes, it was the grammar that threw me off. Well, anyway, we’ll let that go. Percy—now Percy would like to get back. Now that his attention has been called to the dividends. He’s sure that he could bring them up. You see, Percy is such a superior engineer that he gave his mind almost exclusively to the techno—technicrat—no, that’s not it, but you know, the machinery end of things—solving the big problems; but now he realizes that the dividends, they are important in a way—’

‘To Bill Bronze! You’re telling me!’ thought Chris.

‘And I just thought maybe you could get Mr. Bronze’s ear—’

A ludicrous picture flashed into Chris’s mind. Bill Bronze’s ear! A wild elephant’s palm leaf fan! A rhinoceros’s aural appendage!

‘Hardly, Mrs. Hodgkins—’

‘Well, nothing like trying. No harm done, is there, Mr. Weld? I’m so charmed to have had this pleasant two minutes—’

Good Lord, it’s twenty!

‘My car should be here. I wonder why—dinner will be so late. I didn’t think—but then I waited to see the picture all the way round again. I think it’s so unsatisfying to come in at the middle of the feature. Oh, dear, it’s nearly eight—and the boiled cabbage—naughty boy! Here it comes. Do come and see us, any time. Just drop in for tea. We have tea at five nearly every afternoon. I’ve always done it since I was in England, you know. And Clarice will be back from the Springs before Thanksgiving. Oh, dear me, yes, next week. Do come. Percy is usually at home now too, most of the time.’ A troubled look came into the pale blue eyes. ‘Well, I really must drive on! Goo’ bye. So glad—’

The Boss’s ear! A mad-dog’s snout! Chris intended, desperately intended, in the near future to get that ear, by hook or crook, but on quite a different subject from Mr. Percy Halford and gas dividends.

* *

Reaching the Sentinel building, he worked his way through the sidewalk crowd, packed close, thousands of eyes fixed upon the score-board across the street, where the returns were winking on and off from a projection machine firing like a Browning-gun from the front windows of the editorial rooms. He passed through the business office on the ground floor, now only dimly lit, and with all its desks closed, and mounted the iron stairs which rang hollowly under his feet, despite the tumult and the shouting which rose all round the building and the running footsteps on the

floor above his head. He turned into the huge city room where a clatter like that of a cotton-mill, with thousands of spindles running, broke over him. Telegraph instruments clicked, telephones rang and buzzed, chairs scraped, voices muttered, growled, swore, and occasionally yelled. The newspaper men, from managing editor down to copy-boy, shirt-sleeved or not, hats on or off, maintained an outward seeming of cynical, disillusioned, half-amused aloofness, and nonchalance. Chris knew this attitude for a pose, for he assumed it himself, even as his heart beat fast, not from mounting the stairs but from interest in the voice of a nation roaring out its choice of President and policies.

He had listened all summer long to the cries of the contending parties. On the one side, 'Aloofness from Europe and the rest of the world. America for America. Isolation. High tariffs. Protect our own industries. Stay strictly at home. Mind our own business. Collect the war debts, principal and interest. Help to the farmers. Back to sanity and normalcy. Down with internationalism, hysteria, socialization, idealism. Enforce prohibition, no matter what you believe and practice. Have done with schoolmasterly statesmanship; conservatism is the thing.' On the other side: 'Let's back up timidly the ideas of Thomas Jefferson. Go half-heartedly into world affairs! Let's lower tariffs, but cautiously. Remember Cotton, Sugar, and Steel. The farmers must be looked after. Let's not enforce prohibition too rigidly, but soft pedal the whole thing. Not an issue. Yes, collect the war debts. But all things with timidity! Make haste slowly. Sure is safe! Conservative in all things.' Now how in damnation, Chris had asked a thousand times, was any man to choose intelligently between these two cartons, same size, different labels, both empty?

Something of the cynical slouch of the newspaper reporter,

nto which he consciously and unconsciously fell as he crossed the city room, needed not to be assumed. It was true to his mood. He felt like crying out the Mercutian curse, *A plague o' both your houses!* What real difference did it make who was in this hippodrome! Outs wanted in! Yes, that was it, the reason the Old Man, the Chief, Big Bill, wanted Harding. Very well, for the sake of Jane he'd pull for Harding, even though he despised his own self-interested motives. Yes, he wanted in, into the secure affections of Jane, into the family of Big Bill, yonder on the hill.

Where was the Boss? The door of his huge palatial office stood open. Chris walked past, so he could see all corners—the big mahogany desk with roll top, the swivel chair of the Chief softly cushioned in black leather. The glass-topped mahogany table behind the chair, the bull's head with black polished horns from Argentina, the oil paintings, some copies, some originals, of old masters, especially Rembrandt, a marble figure done by Rodin, a bronze bust of the Chief himself by Borglum, and a huge portrait in oils of the maker of the Sentinel and of himself, looking like an Irish country squire, heavy jowled, thick necked, thick lipped, with cheeks that should have borne red club whiskers level with the lobes of his ears, but did not. The sawed-off repeating shotgun standing at the right of the desk. Symbol of sportsmanship or of self-defense, which? The Boss had journeyed, hunted, fished in South America and considered it the important continent of the earth, and never could understand why anybody went to Europe. 'Why don't you go to South America? Now that's a country that's worth while!' Now nobody occupied the office.

Chris slouched over to his direct superior, city editor Jim Gardner, and asked,

'How's it going?'

‘Harding so far, good and plenty. Damn it. I stand to lose ten bucks. I put it on Jimmy Cox just out of loyalty to the craft.’

‘Well, Harding’s a newspaper man, too.’

‘Not much for a good many years. Too busy being Senator.’ The city editor, a drawling southerner, took the horn-rimmed spectacles from a long thin nose and looked up from the sheaf of telegraphic returns. He grinned just enough to indicate good sportsmanship as he discussed his loss.

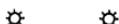
‘Jimmy Cox has been equally busy being Governor,’ Chris rejoined.

‘Anyway, he’s kept his finger on his paper, which is more than Harding did. You know when he came through here in the campaign, the Boss spent an hour in Jimmie’s room at the hotel trying to get his help in fixing up the new contract with that Canadian news-print firm. Jimmy couldn’t help, or wouldn’t. That’s one reason we got behind Harding stronger and stronger.’

‘I see.’ Chris’s brows went up a bit in spite of his efforts at indifference.

‘Then the Boss himself stopped off at Marion on a New York trip. Did you know that?’ Chris shook his head. ‘Something about oil. A place out west called Teapot Dome. Telegraph editor—yes, and news editor, too—better look up that hill, something’s coming out o’ that sugar-loaf, and the Boss is going to get his—you remember what I’m telling you.’ Something about this boy Chris which seemed to lead people to tell him things. ‘Then we plumped for Harding stronger than ever.’ Jim Gardner kissed the tips of his fingers into the air, ‘Goodbye ten-spot! I’m not the gambler that the old man is. The Big Shots always win, in this free and happy land of opportunity. The little fellows always get it in the neck.’ Grinning

still more, and showing a set of even white teeth that shone whiter still in contrast with his black hair and blue-black, fresh-shaven cheeks—he had had no chance for a shave until seven o'clock that day—the city editor stood up, stretched his long lean body to its full six feet, brought his arms, in yellowish shirt sleeves, once over his head, resumed his glasses, and his typewritten copy-paper messages.



Chris walked to the window and stood watching the machine as slide after slide shot the news across the way to the waiting thousands in the street below. Roars of cheers kept splitting the air. The staff-photographer who manipulated the machine grinned with satisfaction every time he drew a volley of cheers. What to him the issues? He played his game and enjoyed it. Whoop 'er up, boys! Yipee!

‘Cinch for Harding, eh, Samuel?’

‘Landslide! Look at Pennsylvania!’ Sam Antenor, half Hungarian or Bulgarian or something that came two or three generations ago from the Balkans or thereabouts, turned to Chris Weld, grasped his shoulder and pointed full-arm toward the bulletin board.

‘You seem happy about it, Sam. Strong for Harding?’

‘Me? All the same to me. Don’t give a damn. What difference?’ He blinked one bad eye, which turned out or in, or what was it? Anyway, it did not seem to jibe with the other eye. He went on happily playing with his toys. He took the little sheets of glass from the boys who helped him, turned them about until he got them right-side-up and right-end-to, and shoved them into place. Then he danced back and swung his short arms as he brought almost invariably storms from the canyon of the street below. He presented the spectacle, always diverting, of a skilled worker,

doing his job superlatively well, and getting the biggest part of his compensation on the spot. Chris watched him awhile with interest and pleasure, and then strolled over to the desk of the managing editor.

To Mr. Edward Brief this city room had served as college, high school, ward school, kindergarten, and all but nursery. He had sold the *Sentinel* on the streets, folding his own papers—before the days of machine-folding—four folds to each sheet. He had carried a route, pronounced rout. He had risen to copy-boy, served as pressman's helper, linotype operator, but always with an eye to the chair he now occupied. Built like a lithe bull, Napoleonic, though a shade taller than the Little Corporal, hard as quartersawed-oak and of about the same complexion, his thick red hair, always disordered, his hands seldom moving, and his china-blue eyes always darting, he appeared thirty-five although nearing fifty, and he talked with a high nasal middle-western twang. He bore the reputation at the *Sentinel* of the best newspaper man in the Mississippi Valley; yes, and outside the office of the *Sentinel*, too, for St. Louis, Chicago, San Francisco had all tried to annex him. Big Bill Bronze had always met their bids, and leaned all the more heavily upon Ned Brief—as to news, mind you, only as to news and policies, not as to outside deals and plots, never as to real estate, taxation, mining, the steel mills, public utilities, railroads, all the thousand and one sources of income, almost never speculative, toward which the hands of Bill Bronze forever stretched out. Yes—Chris looked at Mr. Brief, as the young reporter lounged toward the managerial desk, center of a group of news-gatherers and lay-citizens—yes, undoubtedly a genius, this Ned Brief, a great newspaper man.

Without posing, play-acting, or any form of self-conscious-

ness, Mr. Brief sat with his two red hands, covered with thick red hairs, resting on his knees, rolling a fast smoking cigar from side to side of his mouth, and talking without restraint to whoever cared to hear him: 'They are soaking Wilson, the war, the peace, and everything that belonged to Wilson. They're children mad at the teacher. They're cutting school. They don't want to learn any more, and, by God! they won't learn. They're tumbling out the door, going on strike in a huff, a pet, and a mutiny. They don't care a damn about Harding nor his party. They're just sick and tired of being taught. Give 'em a little time, and they'll be just as tired of Harding and his crowd, and will swing the other way. Tick-tock goes the pendulum.'

'But, Mr. Brief,' interrupted Mr. M. L. Tenner who had platted most of the beautiful new additions to Seminole, and promoted the beauty, prosperity, and desirability of the city as a place of residence, at the same time that he promoted his own prosperity and that of the *Sentinel*. 'But, Ned, don't you think the country intelligent in what it's doing? Your paper—'

'Oh, yes,' Ned Brief agreed.

'My boss, you mean. Our boss, yours as well as mine,' cut in a bespectacled, lean, longhaired and cadaverous looking young man. This Charley Livesay had served as Washington correspondent for the *Sentinel* for nearly five years, had quit in a huff at the close of the campaign, had come home for a few days on his way to the coast, visited the old office, and in spite of himself had felt a member of the old staff. 'He's bought us and our services. I've sold mine to him. So've you. Yes, the Boss is intelligent. None more so. He thinks the Harding crowd will play with him better than the other. He's laid his lines so he can jump with the winner; but six weeks ago, at least, he and I picked the win-

ner. Yes, six months. Maybe the new outfit will play Bill Bronze's game. Yes, they will. But the country's—that's something else again.' The young fellow stopped with a snarl.

'You mean—' But Mr. Tenner knew too well what 'Chick' Livesay meant, and did not wish it brought out in this indiscriminate company; but Christopher Weld did wish it brought out, so he prodded the late Washington correspondent:

'You mean this new administration will not be good for the country?'

'Course I do. There'll be hell to pay. Wait and see. Eight years of Harding and his bunch—there'll be at least eight—and isolation, and high tariffs, and impossible attempts to collect debts, and rampant nationalism, and rugged individualism and one hundred percent Americanism, and all the other nations stewing in their own juice, paddling their own canoes, and we'll have the damnedest panic and depression you ever heard of! Unemployment—Good God! You can't upset the currencies of the world, our debtors, and have good times here at home.'

'But, Mr. Livesay, aren't we sufficient for ourselves? Can't we live inside our own boundaries, manufacture for ourselves, trade with ourselves—a whole continent of our own!' cut in Mr. Clarkson, haberdasher, dressed like an advertisement of sartorial perfection in a two-million-weekly journal.

'No. World's too little and we're too big. We're dependent on others and others on us.' Chick's voice did not rise but twanged away monotonous and metallic. 'We're the banker-nation of the earth. Haven't we waked up to that? How does a wise banker act when he sees one of those fellers coming whose notes he holds? Does he sit back, and

look out the window, or bury his nose in his own desk, and say, "To hell with him. I don't care anything about his farm, or shop, or store"? Not on your life! He gets up, walks over to that wooden rail, reaches out his paw and says, "How do, Jake, how's crops? How's them steers, them hogs?" Or how's the shop? Or how's that new stock of goods moving off? He's interested. He wants his interest, his principal and interest both! Bet your bottom dollar. But we damn fool bankers—hear us yelling down there in the streets?—we're saying to our debtors, customers, neighbors and friends, "We don't want anything to do with you. We're through with you!" No, sir. It won't wash. We're just rushing to meet disaster.'

'Why don't you say so in your paper, Mr. Brief?' urged Mr. Clarkson, a shade of anxiety beclouding his pink-and-white benign countenance.

Mr. Brief looked at him with veiled contempt, and puffed out an unusually heavy smoke screen. Livesay replied heatedly for him: 'Because we're making a product to sell. Do you suppose we want to cover our article with a color or a smell nobody likes? I can talk this way all I please, because I'm through and nobody's going to print what I say. You may be wearing red flannel underwear for all I know, but you can't sell it in your store. You don't display it. Well, this talk of mine sets with Americans about as well as red flannel. It scratches, irritates. I can wear it, but I can't sell it. See? That's why I'm going to Seattle to look for a Communist paper. See?'

They all saw, but none believed, unless it was Christopher Weld. He had heard the same talk from his father, and could at least comprehend.

'Then we're all injuring ourselves without knowing it?' asked Chris.

'Just that,' said Chick Livesay. Ned Brief swung round in his swivel chair and looked with his pale blue eyes a little more intently at Chris Weld, this two-year-old reporter, than he had ever done before. Yes, yes, son of Peter Weld. He at least ought to understand what Livesay was driving at and Ned Brief had some secret sympathy for. Peter Weld whose stuff must be hard to sell nowadays to the magazines in this period of reaction, Peter Weld the liberal, the radical, the Bolshevik as some people regarded him. No red rag was Peter Weld, to this lithe bull, Ned Brief, though he kept his mouth shut. Livesay growled: 'You said it, young fellah. We're playing the game of the bigwigs, not the game of the little fellows like us. No, it's not the game of the big shots either, if they only knew it. They're deluded for once, that's all. They're hanging themselves. They'll pay for it with a crash in their assets. Give them eight years!'

'Where's the Boss?' Chris asked a fellow reporter, in a low voice; but Mr. Brief, who could hear the inaudible, caught the inquiry in the lull of Livesay's declamation, and answered:

'Maybe in Tim's office getting it on the private wire. Maybe at home, though I don't think so. He'll wind up here pretty soon, and go into a huddle over the next play. He never loses any time gloating, holding post-mortems, or talking over what's finished. Wherever he is, he's thinking ahead, but he'll not O. K. anything until he gets his rump onto that black cushion in yonder.' Mr. Brief nodded toward the private office in plain view.

'And selling coal to the poor!' Livesay growled to any who still listened, 'aping Bonfils of Denver, and not doing it handsomely like the Denver Post!'



Bill Bronze came up the iron stairway from the business office. Although well beyond sixty, his breath did not come quick. He rounded into view through the swing-doors to the city room, walking in debonair freedom, with long but portly strides, Tim Donovan panting a few steps behind him. One could see at a glance that the adjective 'Big' applied primarily to the physical proportions of Mr. Bronze, but to other things as well.

His corpulent figure stood no more than five feet nine or ten, his shoulders wide but sloped for strength up to a solid neck, his lips full and sensual, abdomen round to apoplectic proportions. His tawny reddish, yellowish hair of a shade that could not turn very gray, his pink close-shaven cheeks like fresh hog skin, his well-fitting gray autumn suit carrying a check a bit too pronounced for the best taste, pearl spats, black shoes highly polished, his white Stetson sombrero swinging in his hand, he came forward toward the group about Ned Brief's desk with a gentle smile of good humor on his face. The men all sprang to their feet as Mr. Bronze greeted them, one by one.

'Good evening, Mr. Tenner. Mr. Clarkson, how are you? Hello, Ned, my boy.'

The voice came soft and rich, almost purring, as from a big boar feeling good. Remarkable thing about Bill Bronze, that voice, nearly always rich and modulated, seldom excited or strident. Even when tearing somebody to tatters, he never growled, his words just ripped and cut like sharks' teeth.

As Ned Brief had prophesied, Mr. Bronze tarried only a moment, said not one word about the election, but inquired about one man's wife, another's son, and drifted rather than strode into his office, as if borne on a strong current that

could not stay. Tim Donovan, almost a replica of Bronze, followed him; and as Mr. Bronze turned to close the door, he beckoned and called to Ned: 'Come here a minute, please, Mr. Brief. Just a minute.' Ned arose, saying nothing, and passed into the private office.

Christopher Weld stood a moment, gazing at the closed door, dimly heard voices round him discussing the whys and wherefores, the ways and the manners of Bill Bronze and his actions, and then, hesitating just a fraction of a minute, entered a telephone booth and called a number. The Big Chief was safe enough for an hour or so of conference. Only ten-thirty. Jane might be at home. Chris would this very night bring things to a head. Even if Big Bill should land at home about midnight, perhaps the moment might prove auspicious in which to prefer the daring proposition that Jane Bronze and Christopher Weld be wed. Yes, Jane would be at home to him. Come on out. Father might be coming home at any minute. She would not answer for what might occur. Willing to chance it, however, if he was. No, her father's closeting himself with Tim Donovan spelled nothing. He might snip off the conversation between two words. 'You know father! He moves fast and suddenly, and nothing stops him. Never stays up after midnight. All right, all right, rash boy. I'm as mad to see you as you can possibly be to see me. Come quick!'



'A taxi for me!' whispered Chris as winged feet took him down the iron stairs. Through his teeth he shrilly whistled a yellow cab to the curb, and scrambled into it, after giving the address of the Bronze palace on Hunting Hill.

Strange with what speed the human mind can revolve.

That of Chris whirled during a twenty-minute drive with the rapidity of a motion picture camera, and with equally vivid results. House after house he passed, into which he could see as plainly as if he had stopped and called at each one. More so, because if he had paused at each he never could have elicited the information about those who dwelt in it that already lay in his mind. All these homes Bill Bronze, to the certain knowledge of his young reporter, had reached, affected, shaped, or distorted.

Passing out of the business district and going down the slope that leads to the switch yards and the Union Station, Chris whirled past the flat where lived, or existed, Sam Rumble, the big pressman. Mr. Bronze had fired him last month. Some trouble about the union. It came perilously near to a strike. Sam had incited rebellion over some trifles about the dampness of the press room, or about the inefficiency of a non-union helper, Chris never got the exact straight of it. Rumors contradicted. Anyway, Sam went out between two minutes in the busiest part of the night's run. Why didn't his union take up his cause? Ah, that nobody could tell. Big Bill had 'got at' the president and secretary. He had ways of accomplishing things. Flesh and blood never stood in his way. He rolled like a chariot over whom he would. Now Sam sat inside that flat, or lay kicking the covers, beside his wizened little wife—yes, Chris had seen the poor waif of premature age at last June's pressmen's picnic—while the four children, more or less fed, God knows how, lay scattered about in the other three rooms.

That cottage yonder, story and a half, in need of paint—Max Kolsky lived there, hot-headed devil. How he could pound a piano! Came from Hungary or some place where they teethe their children on piano ivory. Doing well, too,

with concerts and lessons, until that blooming rag, bone, and hank of hair got him, tried to break up his marriage, and when he proved unmanageable, to blackmail him. He shot her; not quite to death. He got ten years, and his wife moved to Prison City and camped down just outside the walls. He did about a year and a half of his time, when Bill Bronze took hold, got him out on parole, found that in that eighteen months Max had learned the typewriter with the same chain-lightning accuracy and speed as the piano, and short-hand with the same facility as the composition of music, and now had him tied to a desk somewhere in the outlying corridors of the Sentinel building. Any the less in prison than before? What had Bill in the back of his head concerning Max? Nobody knew but Bill, yet anybody who knew Bill understood that something was there.



On rising ground beyond the station came houses of decayed grandeur. The city had long since run over them to get to the fresher air farther and still farther out, as newer and more beautiful additions had been laid out, boosted by Mr. Tenner and the Sentinel and rendered fashionable. In one of those pillared old houses of a day that was dead, slumbered—Chris hoped that he slumbered—‘Gentleman Jim’ Axman. Angina pectoris might be gripping him at this minute. Chris had seen him doubled up with it one day, at the wheel of his ramshackle flivver, a flap-curtained old touring car, at the curb on Eastern Avenue. Chris himself had summoned a doctor from a dingy office in the next block, had seen the dirty old advertising specialist shoot a shot of morphine into Gentleman Jim, and then had driven the sufferer home and watched Mrs. Axman put him to bed, watched and helped a little. Anybody might have angina

at fifty-eight; but something told Chris that the refusal of the Sentinel any longer to accept Gentleman Jim's advertising for his theater had induced those pains in the region of the heart. Why had the Sentinel refused? That Chris never fully knew. Something that Jim had done—given copy to the rival paper, the Times, or an equal amount of copy, or a news story he had let go too soon, without warning the Sentinel, or had run his theater more to suit himself than the Sentinel, or some other unpardonable and unspeakable thing. At any event, in the days when theaters grew harder and harder to run successfully, Gentleman Jim tried to operate without the Sentinel — no wonder he caught angina. He took a bigger gamble than ever he took in his roulette rooms on Fourth Street in the good old days. That was no gamble at all in fact. He couldn't lose; but in these modern times, when the Sentinel had grown to be all-in-all in Seminole, to buck it proved far worse than to sit in on a game of craps with loaded bones. If Chris had but known it he would have shuddered that Gentleman Jim was breathing his last breath as the taxi rolled by.



Just two houses farther on, the rattling taxi lifted a new scene to the flashing imagination of Christopher Weld. Alexander Drum, shaped like the noisiest instrument in a jazz band, in ludicrous harmony with his name, sat no doubt with the head phones glued to his ears listening to his crystal set — that new-fangled miracle which drew music down out of the ether or up out of the earth — taking in the returns. Alec had only recently moved into this region of grandeur and had not yet grasped the decadence of his environment. Give him a year, and no doubt he would; then he would never rest until he got one of those swell Queen Anne castles

in Tenner's swellest addition, or a stucco Spanish hacienda with a patio, or a quick-built red colonial imitation, with white timber columns of imitation sandstone or marble. Sally Drum would be the first to awaken Alec to the unsatisfactoriness of their present landing stage in their upward climb, its shabbiness and decay. Chris could see Sally and her hennaed hair, her very slender ankles and her very much rounded calves displayed adequately by the short skirts of that presidential election year. He could see her lolling in a huge chair, her six-inch heels upon a purple velvet hassock resting in turn upon a white polar-bear rug, as she held a long ivory cigarette tube in unaccustomed fingers.

Why had Mr. Bronze chosen Alec as one of the elect in the steel business, and lifted him rapidly from puddler to foreman, from foreman to department executive, and from that post to assistant general manager in the space of eighteen months? Chris had weathered storms of high school football alongside of Alec's beef and bovine mentality. Good humored, this human drum! A good center! Too stupid for anything else but imperturbability and immovability. Sally, too, had endured two years of high school and then had gone to work as a mannequin, slender and supple in those days, dark eyed and black haired, with a facial vacuity that passed easily for pathos. In fact, was it not pathetic?

In a split second, a whole line of reasoning went through the swift machine of Chris Weld's meditation. Could Sally offer the explanation of Alec's meteoric promotion? Did the Big Chief—no, not possible! He could have had almost any woman he wanted, with his money and power. But after all, Bill Bronze had brains, personality, that something we call charm. Why should he batten on this moor? He couldn't. All nonsense to say one body is as good as another; not to a man of the emotional delicacy of Bill Bronze. Or

did he possess such delicacy? There was that waitress whom Bill had lifted out of the 'Silver System,' kept in unostentatious luxury for two years until she married a ranchman. Anything necessarily gross about waitresses? Chris had known several down at the Union Station, quite far from gross, indeed just as demure, as dainty, as innately gentle folk as any country-clubber of them all. But Sally—no, inconceivable!

After all, there was something intangible about Alec. Perhaps a spiritual kinship between him and the Chief. Alec Drum had always worshipped Bill Bronze. As a boy, he had watched, with gaping mouth, the open touring car in which Mr. Bronze lolled back his huge bulk, as the uniformed chauffeur, only yesterday a coachman, drove the great publisher, steel magnate, and old millionaire down to the center of the city and the stage of life's drama. Alec always expelled his breath explosively when the equipage had drawn out of sight, always looked up, then down, then all round at nothing, and gave his head a diagonal jerk—all of which indicated the existence of a nervous system in this mass of whale-blubber and muscle and bone.

'I'm gonna work for him some day,' he would exclaim. He did; and from the time he became an apprentice in the steel worker's trade, Alec's worship of the Big Boss grew until it became the supreme dog-like devotion of his life. Big Bill, quick of perception, somehow divined that he stood *in loco dei* for Alec, the individual about whom the first commandment was written, 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me,' the first person of the Trinity, the only person. A man can use a loyalty like that. Yes, and it must be a sweet anodyne, this worship, to lay to the heart of a man so exquisitely hated as Big Bill. If he had a heart. Had he? Surely every man has a heart. It may become hardened.

He may steel it against the world. Some purpose may squeeze all blood out of it. Still it has its human lacera-tions and scar-tissue and pain. Alec's love—yes, a soothing poultice. Yes, thought Chris, that must be the secret of the Drum's dizzy roll upward, balloon-like ascension. Best explanation I can devise.



We cannot follow further the photographic reflections of Chris Weld, as they registered the far-reaching influence of the life of his employer upon the fortunes and happiness or misery of men and women in these homes. His corporate power, too, affected all of these and many others, his im-personal power. The gas rates, the electric rates he con-trolled, the wage scales he devised; the fruits or the lack of them, from the huge system of which he was the real head; the web for which he was the spider; the adjustments gov-erning the amount of life sustenance which might trickle downward to the mass and the amount that must flow into the reservoirs of the few, chiefly himself; all this swirled and rattled through the head of Chris Weld. How happy the Big Chief could have made countless thousands! But how hectic and ghastly the careers of most! Did the Big Chief get happiness as he scattered misery all round him? How happy was Mr. William Bronze? Christopher had often debated this, as he looked into the fat but strangely fascinating and apparently carefree countenance of the most powerful man he had ever known, the picture of American success, efficiency, high achievement, world dominance.

The taxi came to a jerked standstill before the mansion on Hunter's Hill. Chris jumped out, thrust the fare, already counted, and a ten cent tip, into the hand of the driver, glanced at his wrist watch, and sprang up the steps. 'Eight-

een and a half minutes!' he spoke aloud. 'She'll be at the door.' And there she stood, looking out through the beveled glass, frosted in intricate design but with clear spots here and there.

'Jane!'

'Chris!'

Just that way. Natural, unless persons are socially play acting or otherwise posing. Had Chris sought to repress feeling, to assume an unreal control, he would have said, 'Ah, Jane, dear, so sweet of you to be watching.' Insincere. Had she tried to pretend anything, she would have said, 'I'm so glad you came. A surprise. I'm flattered—election night.' Equally hollow. No, these two had no time nor thought for the masks behind which we all habitually hide. Dead in earnest these two, not enacting drama, but living it. Hence it was 'Jane,' and 'Chris,' and a long silence in the vestibule, the prolonged kiss and embrace, wordless, breathless, alarmed. They knew the supreme crisis of their lives loomed. They could avoid it no longer. Chris would not be denied. Jane equally longed for fulfillment of two years of growing love.

For a time they stood and talked, half in whispers, where they were. Jane's mother would not retire before her husband came in. Sarah Bronze did not dare, no matter how weary. Not that she would have anything to say to 'William,' nothing in particular, nor he to her; but that he demanded a reception of some kind whenever he arrived, his court drawn up, present arms, bow and curtsey! Then how delicate his courtesy, how soft and caressing his exquisite baritone, how stately the kiss the little Sarah received upon her gaunt but distinguished cheek, how caressing the hand placed upon Jane's shapely little head with its beautiful brown hair; and how solicitous the perfunctory inquiry,

‘Jane, dear girl, how have you been today?’ And how generous the bearing toward his own son by this second wife, almost fraternal, not heavy paternal, only a shade of tender condescension, ‘Richard, my boy! How’re you coming?’ A courtly gentleman, like a British country gentleman, old school and all that, Mr. William Bronze. No parvenu, no *nouveau riche*, he would have met gracefully the vocative, ‘My Lord,’ or ‘Your Highness,’ or even ‘Your Majesty.’ And did he not belong to the Grand Dukes, the royal line, the fifty-three or fifty-seven who ran the greatest empire on earth? You’re jolly well right he did, and nobody knew it better than he.

‘Come into the library, Chris. You’re sure he’s not coming?’ Jane breathed rapidly.

‘Not for an hour, I’d say.’ But Chris could not put assurance into his voice.

‘He’s likely to drive up any minute.’

‘Well, suppose he does? Got to get it over sometime. Sooner the better.’

Jane shivered visibly at the phrase ‘get it over,’ and Chris, seeing it, burst out, ‘Jane! It can’t go wrong. We’ll make him see it right.’

‘Did anybody ever make father do anything?’ A concentrated bitterness spoke in her query, strangely compounded with a perverse affection.

‘Surely we can—why we love each other, Jane. Doesn’t that settle it? That means marriage. Women marry. You’re a woman. And I—I’ll make good. Maybe I’ll own my own paper some day. He can’t fail to see—’

‘No. It isn’t you, Chris. It’s—it’s anybody. He doesn’t want me ever to marry, I believe. He says I’m too young; but that means ever.’

‘Utter damn nonsense. Good God, you’re twenty-one!’

They stood in the library, his arms about her, looking into each other's eyes, their bodies pressed together.

'Listen, Jane, you've got to marry some day. Why not now? Have you got nerve enough to marry me, whether or no? Tomorrow, tonight?'

'You mean without his consent? To—to run off?'

'Certainly. Yes, yes!'

'I don't know, oh Chris, I don't know! I've never done anything like that. I've never disobeyed him. I—'

'Well, couldn't you now? This is the biggest thing—'

Lines came into Jane's face, as she struggled with the mere thought. Her countenance took on shadows. Her mouth, ordinarily gentle, tightened. Her nose, straight, slender, sensitive, looked pinched. All of a sudden she seemed thirty. Inner battle created outward devastation.

'I—I don't know. I—no, Chris, I couldn't. It's no use trying to fool myself, or fool you. It just couldn't be done.'

'You love him, don't you, Jane?'

'I don't know. Yes, and—and hate him sometimes, too. And I'm afraid of him all the time. I love him because he can be so sweet, so gentle, and—and he is always so strong, even when he's utterly unreasonable. Chris, can anybody hate and love a person by turns—or at the same time?'

'I don't know, he's strange. And you're—you're strange, too, Jane, strange and so lovely. Sometimes you're like a little child. Where he's concerned, you are. Oh, Jane, come with me to New York, now, tonight!'

Chris released her and walked nervously back and forth. He tried anger, ridicule, petulance. She stood twisting her hands, helpless, dejected, a small girl, but somehow stately, reduced, as he had just said, to a little child. An absent presence robbed her of all courage, womanhood, personality.

‘Well, I’ll stay here till he comes and have it out with him. I’m not afraid of him.’ Chris tried to swagger, to convince himself and Jane that he was not afraid. All the time she could see his inward funk, as plainly as if his breast were plate-glass. Then he blurted, ‘Yes, I am, too. There’s no use lying.’

Jane kept a hopeless silence. She could not urge Chris to screw his courage up. She knew in advance the futility. The future, her future, lowered with black clouds, and she could see nothing more. Why had she allowed Chris to grow so fond of her? Herself to grow so desperately in love with him? She knew better. She had just weakly drifted. Two years! Dreams! Only dreams. How could she have been so foolish! More half-hearted debate on his part. More silence, relieved with occasional dejected monosyllables on hers.

They heard the Bronze limousine drive up to the side entrance, the door slam, his latch-key rattle in the lock, his step in the hall, the rustle of the silk lining of his topcoat—they could see it, that tan fall coat—as he got out of it and hung it and his white Stetson on the hook in the closet. They heard his assured step as he moved quickly to the wide arch into the library. They stood, as if frozen, side by side.

‘What does this mean?’ The voice of William Bronze, soft, musical, penetrating, seemed to bring a flush to his face, as he spoke.

‘It means, Mr. Bronze—it—it means that Jane and I—ah—we love each other and—and want to get married!’ That cost more courage than Chris had ever needed over the enemy’s lines in France.

‘Now, my dear boy,’ still gentle the tone, ‘you must know how impossible that is, now or ever. Jane is too young; but even if she were old enough to know what’s good for her,

it must appear, upon a little reflection, that such a marriage — ah, no, my boy. I don't want to hurt you, but —'

'But Mr. Bronze, why not? I'm no rich man's son, but —'
'I said nothing about riches, my boy.'

'No, but you're thinking maybe I'm a fortune-hunter. I'm not. I'll take care of Jane. She and I are willing —'

'It makes no difference. Don't argue. It is impossible, I tell you. Is that clear?' The musical baritone took on an edge, and a bit more volume. 'You'd better go now. Yes, now. There's no need to prolong goodnights. And, son, don't ever come back. It is best for you. It is best for everybody.'

'But, Mr. Bronze —'

'Haven't I told you?'

'Jane!' Chris appealed, but got no word from Jane; nothing but silence.

'Don't you understand? Have I got to —'

'Won't you say anything, Jane?' She shook her head, choked in an attempt to speak, let her head fall forward, her beautiful face turning a leaden white.

'Will you go, young man? Are you so slow of comprehension? Shall I —' The face of Bill Bronze seemed to grow puffed and swollen as well as red, and his hands opened and closed.

Christopher Weld, without further word, took his hat and went.



He began walking rapidly, fiercely, down the elm-arched avenues of Hunter's Hill. The great houses he passed — into these also reached the fingers of Boss Bronze, and Chris knew it. To be sure, Chris had no thought for the victims in the great houses just now; his only conscious craving

was to get home to his father. And yet unconsciously the fate of those in these luxurious homes no doubt formed a dark background for his own desperation; for the young reporter had covered politics enough to know that Bill Bronze had built the Senator's house yonder on the left, just as he had built the Senator. That oil refiner, there in the next house also on the left, he'd better watch his step or he'd go bloo-ey and Bill Bronze would annex the very lime-stones of which the huge rambling structure had been constructed. Mr. Bronze had already secured the necessary freight rebates from the railroads. The squeezing process would not take long. The independent refiner would have to sell out or close out. Across the way stood Mr. Tenner's red-brick colonial, built by Sentinel publicity. Next to it, the successful merchant's mission type structure. At any other time Chris would have smiled as he remembered the gossip of the office, the scandal guaranteed to blow two families sky high as with a charge of T.N.T., the hour's interview between the Big Boss and the merchant, and the campaign of page and double truck ads that began at once to run in the Sentinel. Blackmail, chuckled the editorial force; legitimate business, smiled the advertising staff.

Chris clenched his fists tighter as he passed house after house where the skeleton closet stood locked under the keys of his employer. Although his thought ached only for himself, nevertheless he found himself aware of shared agony. 'The power of the press!' Chris actually growled aloud in the deserted avenue. 'The power of business! Interlocking, nefarious big business! God Almighty! Now it's got me by the throat!' He actually did not know whether he had spoken out loud or not but looked about him, and seeing no one far or near, he spoke again, this time consciously, 'To hell with him! I'll not go nutty! If only she had the

nerve! I'll not let it get me down! He can't get me down! I'll show him!"

He walked more slowly as he got farther from Hunter's Hill, and as the streets grew more and more modest and populous, filled with the homes of brokers, professional men, sales-managers, then clerks, travelling men, then boarding houses and apartments full of stenographers, sales people masculine and feminine, musicians, mechanics, waitresses and waiters. Most of these, Chris realized, might not even know Bill Bronze, much less realize that he rationed out the bread they ate or took it away. He wondered if Mr. Bronze knew, or cared. He looked up at these shabby apartments, mostly dark now, and filled with snoring life, each insignificant person the center of a universe, each one the hero or heroine or villain of a drama, not a comedy—no, not a comedy in the lot, all drama, many a tragedy. Each one as important to himself as Chris. Each one as important to somebody else as Jane to him or he to Jane.

No pleasant place to walk, this center of the ant hill. A cab? No, only in emergencies and on state occasions. A surface car, grinding and screaming and crashing through the night, fit conveyance for the tortured young soul going home, home, the only place to go. To his father, the only one left to go to. Dad might still be up. Yes, Dad would be up, poring over books, papers, reviews. When did Dad ever sleep? Poor old lonely Dad, father and mother both to Penny and Chris ever since—God knows how long ago it must be; yes, Penny's fifteen, and mother went when Penny came. Dad lonely? No, impossible, Dad couldn't be lonely. His world too populous, far too populous. He lived all over the earth.

What would Dad do in his place? As the car jostled and screamed, Chris bowed his head on his palm, his elbow in

the window, while his brain jostled and screamed toward the cottage in the suburb, and sought in advance a contact with Peter Weld. Something, some one to hold to! Hurry, hurry, damn the slow trolley! The last six blocks done in a hurry, afoot, breathless, almost running. To get to Dad!

Dad was up, not late for him, only one-thirty. Books helter-skelter on his table where his reading lamp with a funny big fringed shade—Penny's idea—stood, endured rather than enjoyed by Peter Weld. Copy paper in apparent confusion on the lap-board of thin red cedar, that rested on the arms of a plain wicker-seated chair, flat arms, broad arms, comfortable arms. Peter Weld could not easily rise at the entrance of his son, even if he had impulse to rise, which, apparently, he did not. He merely leaned back, let his white head rest upon the tall back of his rocking chair, took off his little quarter-moon reading glasses—he wore no others—and turned his ruddy face and deep brown eyes upward at Chris.

‘Well, son, it went for Harding?’

‘What? Oh, yes, the election. Landslide.’

‘What’s the matter, boy? Something’s the matter.’ The intuition of Peter Weld need not strain itself to perceive that something indubitably was the matter.

‘Bill Bronze—’ Chris seemed to choke.

‘Yes? Bill Bronze—’ Peter started to smile and then checked the impulse.

‘Damn him! He—he—the blighter, he blights this whole town.’

‘Well, he’s a force; but he’s controlled by forces stronger than he is. He, given his premises, could not logically be or do anything different.’

‘I know. I know. That’s what you always say. Making excuses for him, you are—’

‘No, I don’t think so. I — ’

‘But Dad, if he reached out his hand, grabbed your heart like a chunk of bloody meat, and squeezed and squeezed — ’ Chris knew he was growing dramatic, melodramatic, and broke off, covering his sense of slopping over by seating himself in a straight chair, the only other in the little study, office, or den. After all, though a veteran and the holder of a Harvard degree, he still felt like a boy whipped at school, and whipped hard, his breast hurting worse than his whipped back and thighs. Peter Weld knew now that real tragedy had invaded the life of his boy; and every faculty of his mind went upon a life-saving expedition, ready for daring or for caution.

‘Is it — is it — Jane?’

‘Yes.’

‘Has he — ’

‘Yes, turned me down. Flat. Turned us down. Jane, too. She’d marry me; but she hasn’t — the guts to buck him.’

‘No, of course not, boy.’

‘Why of course not? Why couldn’t she run away with me?’

‘The System, son, she’s caught in the System, belongs to the System. Jane’s a grand girl, but it would take a super-human girl to escape from — the System.’

‘But why couldn’t he take me — money or no money? Haven’t I a clean bill of health, a fair mind, above the average mind — yes, you’ve given me that — and I’ve led a decent life up to now, haven’t I? Don’t I — stack up with any guy — ’

Peter Weld saw that the self-respect of his son stood in danger. He must steer carefully to save that self-respect; he must watch his own words. Words counted in such an emergency, none knew it better than Peter Weld.

‘As I see it, Chris, your own personality is not involved. There’s no finer man in the city or country than you, few so fine. But you — you have not been bred to the System, could not possibly train yourself to the System, would never fit into the System, and Bill Bronze knows it.’

‘Why couldn’t my — my healthy manhood be a fit trade for Bronze’s millions. I don’t mean just that, but — is it money only that counts?’

‘I know what you mean; and there’s no money that can count when balanced against your decent manhood. Only that’s not it. Jane must marry, if she marries at all, a ruthless somebody who can play the game — Bill’s game — the System’s game. That is not your game, and never will be your game. You’d lose your self-respect trying to play it, to carry on the Bronze tradition — you and Richard would be partners, have to be partners — in ruthlessness, hardness, Adam Smith competition and grab, and you’d lose out. Bill knows it, whether you do or not. It’s as if you went out for football when you weren’t interested in anything but geology. You couldn’t examine the rocks and the strata in a huddle or a scrimmage. Not that you haven’t the strength and speed for football, but you haven’t the predilection. It’s not your game. You’d like the college honor of it, you’d like to win and wear your H — all of us in this world like to wear our letters — but you will choose your game. You haven’t the stomach for Bill Bronze’s game. May be a very good game, mind you; but not for you. Your tastes and your training lead you in another direction. If you married Jane and Bill Bronze, you’d never be able to play anything but commercial football. No geology, no music, no art and literature; only grabbing.’

‘I don’t see why.’

‘Because you’d be a part of the System whether you wanted

to or not. You wouldn't own the millions, or rather the stock in the steel mill, the mines and oil wells, and in the Sentinel; but the stock would own you. You think now you could escape, but you couldn't.'

' Still I don't see why I couldn't live my own life, go my own way. I needn't go into the publishing business, nor any of the other businesses. Jane and I could go to New York, to Europe, anywhere. I could make a living for us.'

' How could you escape inheritance? Some day you'd come into part possession of the paper, the mills, the mines —'

' We'd be disinherited, maybe.'

' Would Jane agree?'

' No. There's the hell of it. Why did she have to be Bill's daughter? Why couldn't she have been anybody else's daughter?'

' Are you sure that isn't what captured you in the first place—the glamour of her being your Boss's daughter?'

' No glamour about it—it was just Jane.'

' She's a wonderful girl, I'll admit, but —'

' But what, Dad? ' An eagerness he could not have explained appeared in the face of Chris.

' But — you're not prepared for me to say it, old boy, not now; but there are other girls —'

' Ah-h-h! ' A gesture of protest from the boy.

' I know. I know. It's like telling a widower the very first day that he'll marry again. It's brutal.'

' Widower! You are rough with me, Dad.'

' I don't mean to be, but it's a painful process, setting a broken heart. But you're a wonderful boy, too, Chris. You're one in ten thousand. And — and — believe it or not, there are girls, one in ten thousand, who could fill the vacancy in your heart.'

‘ You didn’t seem to find one for yourself, Pops. Oh, I oughtn’t to have said that! ’

‘ It’s all right, boy. Yes, I had a broken heart then, too; but you and Penny took care of that. You two have filled my life and healed my heart — you and my work. I haven’t needed anybody. But you will, and do. And, after a while, you’ll find her.’

‘ Then you think I ought to give up, give in? I hate a quitter.’ The very words gave Peter Weld the cue he waited for, as they indicated more clearly the drift of his son’s mind.

‘ Unless Jane would — but Jane wouldn’t. You’re convinced she’d never rebel against her father and — and the System.’

‘ No. She wouldn’t.’

‘ Then I see nothing but — to give up.’

‘ I couldn’t stay here then! ’

‘ No, I can see that! ’ Chris looked up from the floor startled.

‘ You’d — you’d consent to my going — somewhere — ’

‘ Yes. The only logical thing, really.’

‘ But — I haven’t enough money.’

‘ I’ll stake you. I’ve some savings.’

Chris looked his gratitude, nervously got up and tramped back and forth two or three times between the fireplace, where two logs smoldered, and his chair.

‘ Where — where should I go, Dad? New York? ’

‘ The best place, boy. You want to write. Well, writing does not make much money; but reporting at least makes a living. Get on a New York paper.’

‘ How can I? ’

‘ Butt on. That’s the only way.’

‘ Butt on? ’

‘ Yes. Hang round the city editor until he has to take you

to get rid of you. Meantime, here's enough to keep you a while.'

Peter Weld reached into a drawer, took out a check book, and began writing. Then he handed the check to Chris, drew out his wallet from his breast pocket, took out all the green-backs it contained, and handed them across the red-cedar lap-board. Not a sign showed on the placid, ruddy face of the hemorrhage that none the less poured from the heart, the hemorrhage Peter Weld had felt three years ago when Chris had sailed for France, the pouring out of his life's best blood at the parting from his first-born, his son, his hope.

'Shouldn't I go down to the office in the morning and resign?'

'Why? Mail a card. Telephone now to the night managing editor, whoever he is. Changes in a newspaper office should come quick. You're done with this little sheet. You're outward bound for a—for a bigger world! You're just getting ready for—for your real career.'

Chris could not understand the calm confidence and relentlessness with which his father pushed him out of the nest. Had he not known the aching love beneath the outward placidity, he might have resented his father's abruptness; but his very knowledge of Peter Weld told him that his own impulse to run away, somewhere, to heal his hurt, was the right impulse. He gratefully, therefore, took the shove his father gave him. While the suddenness of it took his breath away, it gave him fresh breath, too. At dawn he left the house, before Penny had awakened, and took an early train east.

Penny

Forty winks, that's all,' thought Peter Weld, as he heard the insistent voice of his daughter Penelope at his bedroom door. He had lain down fully dressed when Chris left the house, and had, it seemed to him, scarcely lost consciousness when Penny came running and calling:

'Daddy, Peter Weld, where's Chris? He's — he's not in his room. I went to call him, I —'

Only on most pressing assignments had Chris stayed out all night, and then with due notice to the housekeeper, his sister. For that, and other like considerations, she loved him, she adored him, she 'worshipped the ground he walked on,' to use her own words to other girls, not words she ever employed at home; oh, no. There she used very authoritative words indeed, with both her men, patronizing, condescending, most maternal. 'A charge to keep I have,' thrilled her when, at increasingly rare intervals, she heard it sung in the Episcopal church.

Eight years — about the right amount of difference in age to induce worship on her part, and a deep affection upon his, between brother and sister. Had they been close together in years, inevitable strife and contention must have arisen in two natures seeking self-expression, somewhat similar to the pulling and hauling between most husbands and wives, as each seeks to dominate. Eight years, however, enabled her to look up to him as to the planet Jupiter; and him to look with quiet amused joy upon her as upon a vigorous daisy dancing in the breeze. Yes, eight years is to be recommended as the

proper spacing for brothers and sisters. Nevertheless, no matter how much bickering between those nearer together, this single blood-tie of a son and a daughter ranks as one of the toughest old mother nature has devised.

Perplexity, then, and a shade of alarm sounded in the voice of Penny Weld. What had become of one half of her charge to keep? She dimly remembered hearing at some hour of the night the hum of voices from both halves, but she had thought it a dream. Now she knew it was no dream, but a rather portentous memory. She had tapped at Christopher's door, got no answer, and opened it. Only three sleeping rooms with sloping ceilings and a common bath, on the upper floor of that story-and-a-half bungalow. Convenient for the housekeeper, except when Peter Weld kept some wayfarer for the night, some penny-a-liner passing through Seminole, some wandering old newspaper rover, maybe old soak, some impecunious college professor out of a job, or some flaming light of literature, of the sciences, particularly the science of economics, or of the arts, many different kinds, who had talked until nearly dawn, as oblivious as Peter Weld himself of time and place. Then Peter would show the wayfarer to his own room, calling it the 'guest room,' would descend to the library again, get a coach-blanket from the front hall closet, and a sofa pillow, and spend the fag-end of the night refreshingly upon the big, soft, but somewhat scarred mahogany divan. Penny would scold him, and call him 'Peter Weld,' which she always did when severe, and he would enjoy the tongue-lashing.

'Is there anything in this world more delightful than a scourging from Penny?' he used to inquire of Chris, who would shake his brown head and grin, as the white one of his father would go forward and back with the chuckling of his shoulders. Peter Weld chuckled with his shoulders. 'It

makes me think of the way Bib Kane used to train a bird dog. You've seen him, haven't you, a dozen times? I have, a hundred. When a pup is a bit wild and ranges out of sight, or flushes a covey, Bib yells at him in the most blood-freezing voice, summons him back with the awfulest cursings and condemnations to the depths of the most guttural hells, calls down the wrath of the deity, insults that dog with references to his maternity that no self-respecting man or animal can endure — I don't quite see why, because a bird dog bitch is usually the most amiable and engaging of all God's creatures — and then when he has that pup crawling and cringing and whimpering toward him, he belabors the poor forlorn and misguided brute within an inch of his life with — a blade of grass. I feel like that pup, when Penny lands on me, don't you?'

This morning, however, he met his daughter's query without a smile, without a jest.

'He's gone, Penny. He's gone to New York.'

'What for, Daddy?'

'To — to seek his fortune, my child. He — he's outgrown this city.'

'Gone! For good?'

'I hope for good.' Peter even at this sad moment could not help the play on the word. 'Yes, dear, for good, as far as he or I can see. But —'

'And without telling me goodbye?' Tears threatened to flood the blue eyes, actually appeared. Her chin quivered.

'He left you a note, honey. It's on the library table. He — he didn't want to wake you.'

'But why? Why?'

'Go get your note. Give me time to wash up. I'll be right down and tell you all about it at breakfast.'



‘There’s your bacon and eggs, Daddy. Toast in a minute. And coffee!’ These words fell from long habit half in a whisper from Penelope’s lips as she placed the dishes on the table in front of her father. Peter Weld always ate a farm-hand breakfast, a mid-day dinner, and a light supper. He insisted that this practice was not bucolic but hygienic. When told that the animals did not follow his regimen, he replied that man was not so much animal as a thinking-and-feeling machine, that you do not think and feel so keenly in daylight as at night, and that he wanted his blood to come up to his head when the sun went down.

Furthermore, he had fought tuberculosis since graduation from college, had led a quiet and well-fed life, as much in the open as possible consistent with two or three lectures and recitations a day in the State University, and had grown used to the consumption of great quantities of milk and eggs. Now he had rich milk as well as coffee with his breakfast. The flush habitually on his cheeks, in a younger man might signal danger; but now at sixty he had got the upper hand of his foe, by the stern will to live, and bade fair to do his best thinking and feeling in the decade or so ahead. He seemed to breathe as freely as anybody, except for the opening and closing of the nostrils which terminated his long, sharp, slender nose, a motion that only a close observer could detect.

Penelope sat down opposite, the note from her brother protruding from her apron pocket. By and by that note would find lodgment in her breast under the house-dress, where for many days it would remain. She brought nothing to the table for herself except coffee and a piece of toast.

‘Now tell me, father.’ Very solemn the mood when she called him ‘father.’

‘ Well, dear, you see, Chris wanted to marry Jane Bronze. There’s no secret about it among us. You knew already.’

‘ Yes, and lucky for her to get such a man! ’

‘ Yes, if she were free — ’

‘ Somebody else? ’ Penny always chopped off her sentences, economized words, a trait not rare among vigorous women.

‘ No. Only her father — ’

‘ There! ’ Wrath in the big eyes, wrath under the old-copper hair. ‘ I knew it! That old pirate! ’

‘ He can’t help it, Penny. He’s not a free man, any more than Jane’s a free woman. He’s tied hand and foot by the System, the big business, exaggerated capitalism — ’

‘ Yes, I know how you hate it.’ She knew that the out-spoken words of Peter Weld against ‘ the System ’ had cost him his chair at the head of the economics department of the State University. Bill Bronze had moved the board of trustees against Peter Weld. Boyhood friends and schoolmates, to be sure, but what are memories between men who hold such opposite opinions regarding what is good for the state, society, civilization? Dangerous man, this Peter Weld, a red, a college bolshevik, another schoolmaster. Bill Bronze must do his duty as a trustee. God knows how Peter had managed to put Chris through school and college on the slender income he made writing for reviews and lecturing in radical forums. The war had helped, since Uncle Sam took Chris, made a second-lieutenant in the flying corps out of him, and paid him at the rate of about twenty-five hundred dollars a year and his keep. Chris had saved enough to finish his shortened course for officers. Now Peter replied to his daughter:

‘ I don’t believe I hate the System, Penny; I hate some of its results. I study it, as scientific material. ‘ But that’s neither here nor there. What it has done to Chris I hate. Still, I

ought not to say that. Maybe it's an escape for the boy, an escape from slavery. My blood boils at Bill Bronze when I think of what he's done to my boy — but I mustn't let myself feel that way. He could not do anything else —'

‘What did he do? When did he do it? What did he say? Hurry up, Daddy.’

‘He told Chris last night he never could marry Jane, ordered him out of the house, told him never to come back.’

‘What was Jane doing all that time? Why doesn't she marry him anyway? If I were Jane — no, not even you could stop me, Daddy, I'd run — but you'd never try to stop me. You're not that kind.’ Penelope thought of her present sweetheart, a senior in high school where she was only a junior, Edward Engren, who had slept one night in a heavy storm on the divan in the library, had gone up to bathe in the morning while she got breakfast, had slipped into her room and extracted some loose hairs from her brush which he had carefully straightened out and curled round his finger with spit, and had slipped out again without knowing that Chris had seen the burglary. And when her brother told her, she carried off the situation by remarking, ‘He needn't have done that. I'd have given him a lock of my hair, such as it is, if he'd asked for it,’ and loved him a lot for doing it and still more for concealing it. Now her father replied:

‘No, Penny, it's not that I'm not that kind. It's that we're free. I'm free, you're free, from the System. We have our little slaveries, but not the big slavery of the System. If I were in Bill's place, I'd do, I suppose, what Bill does.’

‘You wouldn't, Peter.’

‘Why don't you eat, Penny?’

‘I can't, Daddy.’

‘You'll get hungry at school.’

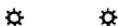
‘I'm not going to school today.’

‘Why, Penny?’

‘Because — I —’ There it came at last. The sympathetic tone of her father brought it on. He might have known! Why did he need to grow personal with me? Men are so unobservant. Didn’t he know I couldn’t swallow tears and coffee and toast all at once? Seldom indeed that this self-sufficient, practical-romantic, housekeeping, hard-studying girl shed a tear, let alone bowed her head on her crossed forearms on the table and cried in sobs. Then when her father came and sat by her, put his arms round her, she turned her face to his shoulder and salt-watered his coat in good fashion.

‘Don’t cry, Penny. There, there, child. Go ahead and cry. Do you good, Penny, darling. Get it off your chest. Don’t cry, Penny. I can’t stand it. It’ll make a man of him. Poor boy, but it’ll make a man of him.’ Then Penny cried the harder. And Peter Weld cried a little.

Bill Bronze, how many tears have you started in the world?



Unusual for Penelope to leave dishes unwashed upon the table for as much as two hours and remain there talking to her father. Not that Peter Weld did not always stand ready to give her two hours; no, eagerly to take from her two hours of time; but that Miss Penelope Weld had a big job on her hands as housekeeper and cook for two able-bodied men, and at the same time to help keep the banner of Central High of Seminole floating at a patriotic and scholastic height and angle in the world of women and men. This morning, however, while the forces of Warren Harding celebrated victory all over the land; while Chris sped eastward in a dejection which, somewhat to his astonishment, due to the rubber rebound of youth, gradually gave way to anticipation of new

battles, new tests, new conquests; while Mr. William Bronze gouged his grapefruit and presided with amiable condescension over his family breakfast; and while all those his hand touched ate or didn't eat, in silence or in loquacity, in all the houses of Seminole and elsewhere, Penny sat with her father and drew him out.

For the first time in her young life she became poignantly aware of whose reign she lived under; and she wished to know more of William the First — or Fifteenth — William the Conqueror, his lineage, his antecedents, the state of his 'scutcheon.

'I knew, Daddy, that you and he were born about the same time, but I didn't know you knew him so well.'

'Yes, we both went to your school, when it was still way down at Sixth and Center Streets, when Seminole was a struggling half-country town. We had some of the same classes, though Bill is several years older.'

'Beg pardon, Daddy.'

'Makes no difference now, but a few made a big difference then. I rather looked up to Bill in those days.'

'You can't now.'

'No, I can't now, although he's a success, a great success according to all American standards.'

'Not your standards, Daddy.'

'Hardly.' Peter Weld watched the mind of a girl just past adolescence begin to revolve and grow. He never expected such a mind to contain anything vital, any real knowledge, real sense of values or proportion. He wondered a little whether there was any use presenting adult angles of vision for it. Half-abstractedly he went ahead with his reminiscence, not anticipating full appreciation, but thinking, 'Oh, well, let her catch what she can.'

Yes, boys together, he and Bill Bronze, didn't Penny

know? No, she had never given the matter a thought thus far, in her crowded and unclouded life. The Weld farm and the Bronze farm, ten and twenty acres in size respectively, had lain at the edge of the frontier town, in the seventies and eighties of the last century when the two lads were growing up. Taken into the city now, to be sure, and built up in rows of dwellings, stores, flats. Bill's people had always adventured in one way and another, owned race-horses, saddle and harness, had put them on the track at the State Fairs, and on the grand circuit, had won sometimes, lost sometimes. Bill had always had pockets full of money, boasted that when he ran out of dough, he extracted bills from his old man's trousers at night. He owned the first breech-loading shotgun in the neighborhood, did Bill. 'The only thing in a long life I've envied him.' Peter smiled as he told of it.

Bill could always buy the favor of the little girls right out from under Peter's nose. Peter never fell in love, which he was all the time doing, but that Bill's attention soon began to focus on the little piece of calico, and his gifts to shower, candy, agates—yes, the little misses made collections of agates, no other kind of marbles, but agates, red, blue, gray, many-colored beautiful agates—the most wonderful boxes encrusted with tiny sea-shells, elaborate candy hearts, and bottles of perfume; and in short order Peter received the inevitable *congé* and Bill reigned as knight for the lady fair. Then Peter's heart ached for a little while until he turned his facile attention elsewhere. To Peter telling it, these frustrated loves of the long ago seemed only whimsical and amusing, but to Penny infinitely pathetic.

'Must not have been girls worth having, so easily bought!'

'Oh, yes, they were. They were all pretty much alike,

those little dears. They all loved what women love now. Money, gifts, have always bought the devotion of the fair sex. Poor Chris can't buy, that's all.'

'Well, money couldn't buy my devotion!' Penny showed indignation. 'It's not like you to be so cynical, Daddy.'

'Wait and see, Penny darling. You have never been tried. Only three consuming passions, you know, hunger, sex, and fear; and the last one, fear, is caused by danger of thwarting the other two.' He continued his narrative. Fortunate for Peter in those far off days that he could love so easily and so often. He found two kinds of girls in the old school, silk-and-ribbon girls, and gingham-and-cotton-twine girls; the first tied their pig-tails with red, or blue, or white, while the second used only white—cotton string. To Peter's eyes, however, even that early, one kind of girl appeared as pretty, and alluring, as the other, and he early learned that discretion favored concentration on the gingham-and-twine variety where Bill did not so readily follow him.

He told Penny, that long morning by the uncleared breakfast table, of his first fight—with Bill of course. Peter's brother, five years older, told Peter that Bill had insulted him. Peter did not know it. He could not at all now remember what had occurred; something round the bench in the school-yard where the water buckets stood, tasting of fresh pine or cedar. Anyway, Peter's brother assured him he would have to fight Bill; if he didn't, he'd have to fight his brother. Now Peter calculated that he would stand a better chance against a combatant three or four years older than one five years older, so he told Bill that his brother said Bill had insulted him and they'd have to fight. They went alone together after school into a deep hollow where no teacher could see, and had it out. Of course, Bill 'licked the day-lights' out of

Peter Weld, and of course they were the same good friends next day. Penny smiled a little and said, 'You have always been hard to insult, Daddy.'

Time rolled on. Bill followed the races, while Peter went to high school and college. A doctor told Peter's mother that she had better send that boy to a ranch, that if he went to college the doctor would not answer for his life. Mother Weld reported the conversation to Peter, adding that his parents were able to send him and would send him, if he said the word. Peter replied that he'd rather have an education and die young than live to old age without one. He therefore went — and strengthened.

Bill Bronze succeeded with race-horses. He knew them through and through; besides he knew all the tricks of the trade and worked them so smoothly that he never was ruled off the turf anywhere in America. In those days of early success he acquired his fondness for wide checks, illustrated vests, and hilarious ties. More than that, a strange thing in a follower of the ponies, he educated himself. In the hay and in the hotels, he read voraciously early and late. He began with nickle and dime novels, but he soon could tell the whole plot and the ending from the first three chapters, so he graduated himself to stronger stuff, which grew more and more stalwart with the passage of years and his growing fortune. He learned about mining and oil-drilling. He began buying and selling leases and lands. When he found any piece of property unprofitable, he proved singularly fortunate in advertising it judiciously and unloading at heavy profit. He often said, 'I will buy and sell anything — at the right price.' Ultimately, he did buy or sell nearly everything in Seminole. He even bought a run-down mortuary and put new life into it. He bought the *Sentinel*, almost a mortuary, and made it a living, breathing, slashing thing.



For two hours Peter Weld wandered on at great length, content with the eagerness and receptivity of his daughter. Half-past ten, and interruption arrived. A jangle of the uncertain front door bell, then a vigorous knock from a fist upon the panel. Penny, removing apron, answered. In a moment she returned to the dining room, jerked her head toward the library across the hall and whispered,

‘Someone to see you, Daddy.’

‘Who?’

‘Don’t know. Said his name was Powers, or Powell. Young man. Never saw him before.’

‘Powers, Powers?’ Peter searched memory—to no avail. He arose and passed through the dining room, across the narrow strip of hall, into the library. Penny heard a voice—rather bass and booming, but musical all the same—abruptly announcing:

‘My name’s Powers, Mr. Weld, Hapwood Powers. I’m a classmate of your son Chris. I didn’t know him well, but—I have read after you a great deal, and agree with you almost always. I ventured—I hope you don’t mind my intrusion, I—it’s the penalty you pay, you see, for making a better mousetrap—’

Certainly a cultivated voice, even if a bit aggressive. Classmate of Chris, oh, you certainly came at the right time into this broken home, into these broken hearts. ‘Hearts don’t break, only stretch,’ had been Penny’s aphorism hitherto in shaping her conduct toward masculine youth. Now at the going away of Chris, she might have to revise it, yes, she certainly would revise it. She felt symptoms. This newcomer might bring something to help mend the crack. She brought a text-book, paper, and pencil, and sat down at the extreme southeast corner of the dining table, where her

line of vision struck upon his southeast shoulder. Her father never took a brand-new visitor into the den—an old closed-in porch at the north end of the library; grateful for that, Penny. She liked that broad sloping shoulder and the hair, very brown, but not black, above it. Classmate of Chris! She wanted terribly to go in and listen, although she did not need to, in this little house; she could hear every word even of her father's let alone that big *basso profundo*.

‘No, Chris is away,’ she heard her father say. Pretty big voice her father had, too; she had never realized quite how big until she found it holding its own with this vigorous young organ. But not quite so deep, Peter’s voice, rather—ah—barytone; yes, that’s about it. Penny found herself wishing and willing that this stranger should turn that shoulder round. Seemed a bit uncanny when suddenly he did so. In reality he looked back to see if he had closed the front door, but plainly he forgot the front door when his eyes met those of the little girl who had let him in. She apparently belonged here. Now she flushed and turned her eyes quickly to her book and paper. But he never noticed. Only a little school girl, a maid or something, in this great scientist’s home.

‘Happy’ Powers turned his very serious face quickly back toward his host, and for half an hour Penny heard his autobiography. Of the class of ’18, he had got inoculated with the bug of reforming the world, had left college for the mines, West Virginia and Kentucky. Coal. He had worked as a miner. He became active in the union. Bunk, the biggest part of the union management. Allied with the System, capitalistic as big business. The officers, subsidized directly by the operators, were led around by the nose by business. The men, under corrupt and selfish leadership stood unable to turn a wheel in their own behalf. He sup-

posed, Happy Powers, that he'd been impractical, too idealistic, over-radical; they called him communist, and his own union had kicked him out. Sore? Of course. The young fellow tried to carry off his heartache with a hard and cynical bearing; but evidently he quivered all inside, quivered like disturbed jelly. He had come to talk it all over with Peter Weld, to find more assurance that he was right, had done right.

Peter consoled him, told him to stand to his guns, that the System was riding for a fall. 'Give it rope. In and out of the unions the System will hang itself. You're young enough, Mr. Powers, may I say Hapwood? I may not live to see the building of a new social structure; but it is perfectly clear that this one will tumble from roottree to foundation stone. "Co-operation" tomorrow will ring out as a real slogan, a true battle cry.'

Penny's cracked heart somehow recognized the tones of crackedness in the basso voice of the young man; she struggled hard and vainly to will that shoulder to turn round once more; it wouldn't. She found need to consult the encyclopedia, and to think up something to consult it about. She went into the library, begged pardon in a whispering voice, took down the volume marked 'L,' and looked up labor unions. She did not take it to the dining table, but carefully turning her back to the two men engaged in building a new world, she sat down in a corner and appeared studiously to investigate unions.

'This country, I think, will never go communist,' her father spoke quietly, with placid brow, 'nor will it, in a century or so, pass through bloody revolution, if ever; but nonetheless it will know revolutionary changes. The old System cannot endure. The exploitation of the masses by the few cannot continue. I hope business men and statesmen

will see the handwriting on the wall in time, time enough to prevent red revolution, will do away with the System, business for the few, the fifty-three or fifty-seven or ninety-five, who now rule the country and get richer from it.'

'They'll never do it voluntarily. Who ever let go of privilege of his own free will and accord?' The younger man spoke aggressively, emotionally.

'I know, I know.' Peter tried to put consolation into his voice. 'They will meet with compulsion, all right—the compulsion of circumstance, of the wreck of their own plans, the crash of their own structure. They can't see—can you?—that their present gait will take them into a debacle, their attempted isolation for this country, their policy of get-all-we-can from the rest of the world, collect debts according to the letter of the bond, exclude goods of other nations, put up barriers to trade, to hell with other nations, their currencies and their prosperity—all this will plunge us over the precipice. They can't see it, but that will not keep it from happening. Then when unemployment grows to staggering proportions, and half the population don't know how they are going to live after thirty days, two weeks, a week, something very like the howling of a mob will sound outside the office windows of the Big Boys, and they will give way to pressure. If they don't, God help us.'

'I don't believe they'll ever give way, short of bombs and guns and torches.' The big young fellow spoke with a certain dejection of doubt, as if hoping for reassurance. Penny looked over her shoulder at him, startled to hear such talk. Even her radical father had never gone that far. She now examined Hapwood's figure minutely as he sat on the edge of a chair, elbows on knees, leaning toward Peter Weld. He held a cigarette between big thick fingers. She noted the dark hairs on the backs of his hands, and that his fingers

wanted a bit of manicuring. Coal. Poor boy! How could he help it? His gray clothes—well enough pressed, none too close fitting, however, as if he needed plenty of room for the play of big muscles. A soft khaki shirt, a red tie carelessly knotted. She remembered he had worn a cap. Did he follow even in dress the mode of the bolshevik, as he did in thought? Utterly untamable, this big fellow. The brute he looked? Any softness in him at all? Penny grew almost frightened of him, started up to go back to the dining room with her sheepskin volume. He cast a glance at her when she made the movement, then looked away as if he had not seen her. Peter Weld mildly said:

‘My daughter, Penelope, Mr. Powers.’

‘How d’you do?’

‘How d’you do?’

Penelope now sat down again as if shoved into her chair, breathing rapidly. She looked into his face, because he quickly looked back at her father. Somehow she liked the face, not half so brutal as the rest of him, either speech or figure. Big blue eyes, big nose, full mouth, big forehead, jaws, neck, big and somehow gentle. She thought of Abe Lincoln. After this scrutiny fear departed. I’d like to get at those hands with a nail brush and file. She had manicured Chris often and often. He paid her half-price, and more than full price in brotherly love. Love! That word! What! for a big, full grown man? Old as Chris. Eight years older than I am? Penny Weld, you’re a fool. What do you know about full-grown men? Only Chris. What would the other girls think if they knew she was entertaining a full-grown man. Entertaining? Wonder if he’ll stay for lunch? Her heart jumped. Not lunch, but midday dinner. Peter Weld must have a full dinner, and she never could prepare it for her father except on Saturdays and

Sundays. He always went to the University Club. His only luxury. I'd love to get dinner for the two of them. Will father ask him? Would I dare? Oh, no. I couldn't. Classmate of Chris. He ought to come often. Does he live here? Never did Penny's mind turn round at a more rapid and inquisitive gait. She forgot to listen to the dialogue on the possibility of another American revolution, the second, Peter Weld called it, and insisted it would come about without bloodshed. That much she grasped; and felt relieved that Hapwood Powers would not lead a horde of bolshies against a barricade of bourgeoisie. That's what he called everybody else. She never doubted he would be in the lead, wherever he was and whatever he undertook, never doubted half as much as he did. Careful, Penny Weld, you're too easily swept off your feet by passing strangers. Strangers? Nothing of the kind. Classmate of Chris. She was dying to ask him what he thought of her brother Chris, and didn't he adore him? If he didn't, he'd better, or she'd never speak to him again. Suddenly she realized how sorry she'd feel about that. Well, perhaps she would just speak to him—a little—even if he didn't adore Chris; but of course he did, how could anybody help it, especially a classmate.

‘I'll look for that article,’ her father was saying as Penny came back with a jerk to reality. ‘Just excuse me. It was written and published fourteen months ago, but I think I have two copies on file. If so, you may have one, if you really think you'd care to read it sometime when you're not too busy.’

‘Happy’ Powers stood up as Mr. Weld moved toward his den. Busy? A good while since he, Happy, had been busy. Plenty of time to ponder the philosophy of leisure, and the psychology, and the social significance, and the relation to

a machine-age. Busy, good God! This old gentleman was being courteous; a euphemism, of course. Happy stood regarding the closed door of the 'den' through which Peter had passed. He moved neither hands nor feet, and looked as if he hadn't moved for a month and didn't intend to move for a month more.

'Hem!' Penny's voice tried to be abrupt and brave, even brazen, at least woman-of-the-world. 'Don't you—don't you adore Chris?'

'Chris? Well, I dunno. I—ah—you see I scarcely knew him. He made the Lampoon. I made nothing, except the Socialist Union.'

'You would have adored him, if you'd known him. I'm sure of that.'

'Maybe. Yes, by heck, I would. If he's anything like his little sister. I had one once. She's dead now. She was about your age. Do you care if I kiss your cheek, little sister? There! Yes, you're adorable. I'm sure if I'd known Chris I would—well, I adore you, how'll that do?'

That light brush of his lips on her cheek, just over the bone, not like any kiss Penny had ever had. Went clean through her. Her head swam. Her toes tingled. Her breath came fast. Is this what fainting is like? Gentle? Of course he's gentle, as gentle as Daddy. Is this what a grown-man's kiss is like? Nothing like a seventeen-year-old boy's, not even when smack on the mouth. Oh, my! I'm blushing like mad! Why, he's blushing, too, look at him, the big brute, the dear big brute. Look out, Ned Engren, your nose is slipping out of joint! Penny would not wash over that cheek-bone for a week; sacred that spot where his full lips had touched; like velvet, too, or two parallel rolls of soft gauze, such as the dentist places in your mouth when he

goes to fill a tooth. Penny had recently had a filling, a very little filling, and had been greatly intrigued by the small machine with its two rolls of gauze. Delightful stuff, gauze.

* * *

‘You may not like my forecast at all.’ Peter Weld returned with his article from the National Review and handed it to the younger man. ‘But I have ventured to state in here that we can and probably will avoid red revolution by inaugurating a quieter type of revolution — drastic, oh, yes, but legislative, setting the service motive in industry and commerce above the profit motive.’

‘What’s going to bring about this millennial idea, short of force?’ Happy spoke with a cynical skepticism evidently habitual.

‘The government. At present, I know, the government of every city, county, state, and even the nation is controlled by personified wealth, and is shaped by the profit motive. I know, too, that nothing but force can jar loose the fingers of the privileged; but there are other forms of force besides armed force; there’s economic force, panics, depressions, unemployment, hunger, and anxiety. These things may devastate just as truly as bombs and machine-guns, and cause as much fear. When the people have suffered enough, they will rise—’

‘Yes, by God! Excuse me, Miss Weld!’

‘—Will rise and exercise their power through legislation,’ completed Peter Weld.

‘All congresses are bought.’

‘At present, yes. But after the time of suffering, congresses will hear another voice, the voice of the unemployed people—’

‘Through organized labor? We’ve just got through agreeing how futile is union labor and its venal leaders.’

‘I know that, too. Granted that, just now, labor is in cahoots with business, dickering with business, getting the best split it can bargain and wheedle and squeeze out of business, for itself; compromising its future welfare and that of society for a present advantage. Yet the time will come, and in no distant day, in my opinion—I shall live to see it—when the present iron-bound partnership between skilled labor and big business will be broken by the far more numerous class of unskilled labor, led by the real leaders, the scientists, the technologists, the experts in industry, agriculture, and economics.’

‘This mob cannot organize, cannot get together.’ Sullen the young man’s tone.

‘They would have to organize to pull off a successful revolution by violence, wouldn’t they?’

‘Yes, I suppose organization would come out of the chaos.’

‘It would have to, and mighty quick, too, or civilization go to pot. I doubt if we could live through a month of violent revolution. Think what it would mean to have transportation stopped for a week, food-stuffs cut off, communication broken, telephones and telegraphs severed, water mains blasted in two and stopped, fires raging, thirst raging, gas mains broken, electric lights put out, marauding, looting, murder turned loose. Civilization is so dependent on its machine-made order that it could not survive even a brief interruption of the steady on-going of its machines.’

‘Yet labor has always fought the machine!’

‘In this country, yes. In England, no. After the industrial revolution, when at first labor fought the introduction of machinery because it threw men out of work, smashed looms, and burned textile factories, English labor saw that

machines only changed the form of employment, called for management, supervision, for shipping clerks and the like, released labor from hand-work to head-work. Then English unionism took in all head-workers, teachers, professional men, clerks, stenographers, what we call the white-collared class. Then it got a grip on government. That is what I expect in this country. We generally follow England in the development of our history. Labor in America will grow more intelligent, keep an eye not merely on present but far-off advantage for itself and everybody else.'

'Of course there's no use trying to stop the increasing dominance of the machine. Technological unemployment will grow, not lessen,' admitted Happy Powers.

'Until we have time to make adjustments, yes. We are very jagged in our advance, slow in one place, rapid in another. Many men are still doing hand-work that machines could do just as well, and better. Humanity is limited in efficiency, by inexpert fingers, flagging attention, boredom; a machine is accurate, regular, and always efficient. We shall supplant men by machines, and release men even from tending machines. Machines will tend machines, in ever-increasing serialization. We might as well get used to the thought. By and by we shall do nothing by hand that we can do so much better by machinery. Already we cook, wash, sew, and refrigerate by machinery, electrically driven. I expect to see Penny here, before I die, press four or five buttons and do all her housework, while reading a book in the window.'

'Speed the day!' Penny laughed, and the stern face of Happy Powers broke up into a startled smile, giving some justification to the nickname of 'Happy.' Penny looked at him with a warm glow in her heart, showing on her face. Why, he could be happy, couldn't he? He could be made

happy. Think of it, a word of mine brought that happy look! Bet I could bring that look there a lot of the time, maybe all the time, if only—Penny, you're a little fool again. Well, anyway, here goes!

‘Mr. Powers, will you stay for luncheon? It will be very simple, but, I'll go and press some buttons, if you will.’

The effect of this sudden and unexpected invitation startled Peter Weld more than it did Hapwood Powers. Penny had never been known to do such a thing except for some school-friend, boy or girl, who happened in. Growing up, she is, thought Peter, and looked at her, pleasure sitting plainly on his brow. Taking the position of hostess in this house. Years of it ahead. She wanted this friend and classmate of Chris to stay. Well, to tell the truth, so did Peter. He did not just know whether the younger man might be bored. He did not show boredom, to be sure. Very well, he could easily decline, plead another engagement. To his gratification—and Penny's—Hapwood did nothing of the kind, but after a second's hesitation, in which he looked at Peter to see if the invitation met approval from that quarter, he replied easily and quite in the manner of a man who knew his way about socially. ‘I should be charmed, Miss Weld. I'm not very hungry, and I'm sure your machine-made luncheon will prove quite sufficient.’

Penny placed her big quarto sheepskin volume back on the shelf and moved out of the library, throwing back over her shoulder the remark, ‘You two will have plenty of time to work out the revolution, bloody or bloodless; as my machines are not quite perfected. The electric dish-washer will have to go to work first. Think of it, my father talked so much he hasn't even given me time to clear up after breakfast, and here it's nearly noon.’

‘How old did you say that child is? Pardon me.’

‘She’s fifteen.’

‘She seems older. But she’s a dear. She wanted to know if I adored Chris.’

‘You’d better! ’

‘I’ll begin right away.’

* *

‘You think, then, I’m right in cutting loose from union labor, or rather in acting so that they kicked me out?’

‘Unless you felt you could remain and bore from the inside. Evidently you can’t.’

‘Well, how can I work most effectively for the revolution?’

‘Could you stomach the Socialist party?’

‘I’m afraid not. It’s not sufficiently red-blooded and radical.’

‘The Communists are on the wrong track—for this country at least.’

‘They’re doing damn well in Russia.’ Hapwood by this time had grown aware that Peter Weld could take any kind of language, appeared indeed a ripe man of the world.

‘But Russia is a very different country from America. Russia was largely rural, we are much more industrial. Russia had a peasant population, except for a few aristocrats, only two classes at extreme ends of the social scale. We have a complex culture, all classes, and, as I told you, a large group of experts, technologists. Whether we know it or not, we are rapidly moving toward a government of scientists. Remove the experts, and all our wheels would stop, as I have said, in twenty-four hours, and starvation and all the plagues break loose in a week.’

‘Then I’d better turn to, and become a technologist, an expert in machinery?’

‘How old are you?’

‘Twenty-three.’ Powers looked lugubrious, as if that meant old age.

‘You are plenty young enough to become any kind of expert you please. Why not an expert in economics? That’s my own field, and naturally I’m partial to it. But I don’t want to influence you against your tastes. Still, economists will be needed, are needed right now. Look at the way we are balling up our world relations, demanding our pound of flesh, the letter of our bond, and at the same time building high tariff walls to shut out payment in the only way that payment can be made, goods.’

‘I don’t see through that. They hired the money, didn’t they, as Governor Coolidge, Vice-President Coolidge, said?’

‘Let that be your first problem in economics. It’s a beautiful one. Tough one, too, and will take you over almost the whole field, stabilization of currencies, gold as a medium of exchange, and all the rest. Our bankers have never studied it, most of them, let alone our politicians. Why, the statesmen of Europe, even, are in abysmal ignorance about it. Poor old Clemenceau, Lloyd George, and the rest, piling the mountains of reparations on Germany. They didn’t even know that they could be paid only in goods or services, that there isn’t that much gold in the world.’

‘I do catch a faint glimmer.’ Hapwood Powers looked at the placid philosopher with a new respect, almost reverence.

‘Why not bore into the subject? It’s fascinating and complicated enough to challenge any man’s intelligence.’

‘What good will it do, if I do learn about it? Mere knowledge doesn’t overturn systems. Why not get into some party, and do something practical, something that can be felt?’

‘Where is the party?’ A strong note of challenge crept into the voice of Peter Weld.

‘I—I don’t know. That’s just what I came to consult you about.’

‘Well, I’m doing my best to answer, my boy. I’d say the party of the future is a party within parties, a party above parties, the party of the scientific men, experts, technologists. Sure as you live, the hand-workers and the experts will join forces, and the experts will be nominated by the mass of hand-workers, farmers and laborers, to lead in the revolution. Fit yourself to lead in some line of scientific training. I suggest economics only because it happens to be my own line. You have a livelihood, I take it?’

‘Oh, a little ahead; but, turn me out in my shirt tail and I can make my living any time, and work for the revolution on the side.’

‘Fine.’

‘Where would be a good place? Where would you advise me to work?’

‘Why not here? I’d say that you could find work with Bill Bronze, either at the Sentinel or at the iron-works. Chris has just left the Sentinel. How would you like the newspaper game? It’s just in line with the study of events and of economics, if you like. Or would you prefer to go back to the university?’

‘No. Neither one. I prefer the iron-works, and first-hand contact with the workers. That has always been my idea—promoting the revolution—till the workers themselves kicked me out.’

‘No, not the workers, but their leaders, compromising and conforming leaders, who really are a part of the System.’



Twenty-nine hours later, while Penny, home from school, bent over her books at that same dining-table, the telephone rang. Peter Weld, absorbed in books in the den, never thought of answering.

‘Is this Miss Weld—Penelope?’

‘Yes.’ Penny started to make a facetious answer, but checked herself when the voice proved not to be from one of her own set, a cultivated voice, too well modulated for one of her high school friends.

‘This is Jane Bronze.’

Penny caught her breath, almost as if a lover of her own addressed her; was not the love of Chris as close to her as her own?

‘You may not remember me, but I remember you.’ Could Penny ever forget Jane Bronze? Who could? ‘Your brother introduced me to you, in front of the Rex Theater? But—’

‘Of course I remember, Miss—Jane.’ Penny substituted the first name for the second, which was on the tip of her tongue.

‘Could you—would you take a little drive with me, if I came by—I—ah—I’m down town, and can be there in a quarter of an hour—longer, if you wish—are you very busy?’

‘Not at all, Miss Bronze. I’ll be happy to go, and am ready right now.’

‘Thank you, Penelope, may I say Penny? I wish you’d say Jane.’

‘Okay—I mean, certainly. I’ll say Jane, then.’

‘In fifteen minutes—’

What can she want? Wants to know about Chris, of course. Well, I’m sure I want to talk about him. How

could she turn him down? I couldn't in her place, System or no System. I resent—but Daddy doesn't. What does he know about girls? Daddy's not human! He's—he's a theorist! I'll try to treat her white, but—I know I'll be snippy. Why did Chris want to pick on such a hifalutin dame, anyhow? Always aspiring to what is out of reach, that's what we all do. Now Hapwood Powers, he doesn't even think of me except as a child. Can't he see I'm a woman? The boys at school refer to us as women.

Penny put the tips of her fingers caressingly to her cheek where he had kissed. Then she stood in the archway between the dining-room and the little hall, stood on tip-toe, examined the woodwork above her head for finger-prints. He had stood just here yesterday afternoon when he said goodbye, had pressed his left hand, holding his cap, into his narrow hip, and his right just here on the lintel and leaned upon it in a careless and easy pose. No, she could not find the prints; so she placed her own hand at as nearly the exact spot as she could, tried to lean against it, but leaning became only reaching. How tall he looked, how strong, terribly strong! Stronger than Chris. What would he have done in Chris's place? He'd have carried that girl off, and smashed the System. What does he care for systems? He's out to smash 'em. No, he's no stronger than my Chris. I won't say that. How could he be? Yet all the time something tells me he is. I hope he never meets Jane Bronze! Oh my! Panic seized Penny at the very thought, panic and jealousy, the first twinge she had ever known. She had never needed to feel it, had had things her own way with any of her 'dates.'

The car came, sounded the horn, and found Penny ready. She had murmured to her father's half-hearing ear that she was going out for a ride, supper might be a little late.

‘Very well, child, any time.’

He did not even ask who was to be her companion. Peter Weld had always trusted Penny, let her tell him of her experiences after the fact, never warned her in advance. He merely informed her of the dangers of riding with boys or men she did not know all about and could not trust, told her how to conduct herself in doubtful situations, and how, if need be, to defend herself from violence, and allowed her discretion to do the rest. She never failed his trust, took all his instruction she needed—for her set already possessed much worldly wisdom—and moved about with the freedom of a young bird with a strong wing. Assured, this girl, nothing if not assured. Good ground for her claim to womanhood.

Jane watched her dancing down the walk to the cottage gate. Penny stopped herself half-way and bethought her of dignity. Jane smiled. ‘She’s a pretty little trick, yes, undoubtedly more than merely pretty. Had she something—something more than Chris—something stronger? No. How could anybody? I wish my hair were not so black, more coppery, like hers.’ Penny would have quieted the quake in her heart, if she had known that the grand dame, Jane Bronze, envied her in the slightest particular. ‘And I wish I were a school girl, like her, again, and—and that I did not belong to my father body and soul—that I were poor like her. Yes, I do.’ The wretched young woman would have traded places any minute with this so less privileged girl. Or thought she would; at the moment thought she would.

‘Step in. Which way shall we go?’

‘Thank you. Oh, anywhere.’

‘The park? Past the Zoo? Lake in the Woods?’

‘Lovely.’

When the big coupé got smoothly under way, after a little silence, Jane began with perfect honesty of tone and manner, 'I want to know about your brother. I've not heard—'

'Neither have we. Not time yet, really. He's barely reached New York.'

'New York?' Jane caught a quick breath. 'Has—has he gone?'

'Yes, didn't you know it? Left yesterday morning. He's—he's going to try for a place on some paper there.'

'Do you know why he left?'

'Yes, my father told me.'

'He has given up—'

Penny nodded, and tears came into her eyes at the despairing tone of the other, tears not merely for Jane, but for Chris, for the whole tangled, upside-down world.

'I—I suppose it's better. I'll—I'll never marry—anybody.'

'That's the way you feel now, of course.'

'Yes, and always.'

Penny, despite her desire to spare Jane scrutiny, found herself looking into a face that suddenly seemed thirty-five. Lines appeared in the cheeks at right angles to the mouth, and horizontally across the forehead; the muscles of the jaws hardened and stood out; some of the beauty froze. Jane continued, 'I could never marry anyone but Chris. Any other marriage would be only a sort of business contract, a convenience; and I don't believe my father would agree for me to marry any man, no matter who.'

'Not some great man, some rich and powerful man?' Penny paid her unconscious tribute to the System. She spoke with a certain awe to Jane Bronze. Would not any child of fifteen, even one who considered herself a woman,

have felt flattered by this frank seeking of her out, this confidence in her, this consultation with her on the part of so eminent a person in the life of Seminole and of the country as Jane Bronze? Would it not help make Penny a woman? Make her grow? Take herself seriously? She felt, during that hour's drive, only a momentary impulse at one time, to tell Jane something of Hapwood Powers; but extinguished it in an instant. Even the thought that Jane might be of use to Hapwood through her father could not bring Penelope to break an habitual reserve. She smiled at the thought of anybody helping Happy Powers, of his needing help or permitting it, especially anybody of the name of Bronze. Now Jane answered her question:

‘No, nobody. Not even a prince or a duke.’

‘Oh, last of all, I’d imagine.’

‘Anything masculine, last of all.’ Jane smiled without mirth. ‘I sometimes think he’s in love with me, himself. Not anything conscious, you know. You’ve read of such things, haven’t you?’

‘Heard of them.’

‘I never did till recently. I love him, too. He can be so attractive, so considerate. He has been the best father in the world, although my step-father. Persons who think him so hard, and cold—oh, I know what everybody says about him—just don’t know him. He’s as tender as a mother, sometimes I think more gentle than my mother. We all love him at home. He makes us all happier as soon as he comes into the house. And he’d spill the last drop of his blood for us. Just in this one thing he is like a crazy man—when any man comes near me. I can’t understand it.’ Jane’s face added perplexity to rebellion.

‘Why don’t you have him psycho-analyzed?’ For the first time Jane laughed aloud.

‘Yes! Psycho-analyze the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer lion!’ Penny had made her suggestion in all seriousness, and now looked abashed.

‘I’m not laughing at you, dear,’ Jane said. ‘I’m laughing at the idea. Just catch your lion, then ask him about his dreams. Lots of times I have asked him why he is so sweet at home, and so fierce outside. He only smiles, pats me on the face or the arm, and says it’s because the world is fierce, men will get you if you don’t get them first, they’re a pack of wolves, and only the fierce wolf survives and takes care of his den. He says it’s the way to manage men, by fear.’

‘Must be other ways.’ Penny knit her brows.

‘I don’t know. Maybe he’s right.’

Once more the hardness settled upon the face of Jane. ‘But you can’t help loving. I love Chris, will always love Chris. And I love Dad, can’t help loving Dad. I—I’m so mixed up. I wish—I wish I could run away from everything—way off yonder.’ They were sitting in the car which stood still beside the Lake in the Woods. Jane waved her hand at the hills toward the east, beginning to grow shadowy as the November sun sank early.

‘That’s where Chris is—way off yonder,’ said Penny.

‘I know, but I didn’t mean that. I mean anywhere to escape.’

‘But we can’t, can we?’

‘No. There’s no escape from ourselves. We can’t run away from ourselves, no matter how far we run. There’s no escape from reality, from life.’

* * *

Peter Weld, writing furiously, looked up at the entrance of his daughter to the den. He put away his manuscript, leaned back in his chair, smiled at the figure in red slippers,

red pyjamas, and blue dressing gown, boyish figure, but developing curves. She came as usual to say good night, and Peter Weld did not care how long it took her to say it. She carried a match-box in her hand. Peter half-consciously took note of it.

She no longer sat on his lap. She never thought why. Peter Weld knew why; he did not encourage it. He knew all there was to know about this father-daughter business, all that had been learned by science up to date regarding the unconscious ties likely to develop between mother and son, or father and daughter. Having stood in the place of father and mother both to this child since her birth, he intended to be doubly watchful, doubly careful. Now she came and sat on the arm of his chair while he leaned away to get a better look at her, and let his hand rest carelessly and not too caressingly upon her shoulder. She played with the match-box a while, until she became so absorbed in the conversation that she released it upon the table.

‘Daddy,’ she began, ‘that was Jane Bronze who took me riding before supper.’

‘Is that so? Now really!’ Peter showed his astonishment plainly enough! Then he said, ‘But why not?’

‘Wanted to talk about Chris. I thought I’d hate her, but I didn’t.’ Penny talked with staccato sentences.

‘Why, no, of course. She’s—she’s beautiful and—’

‘And lovely. A good sport, too, I’d say. Only—she ought to run off and marry Chris. I would. Nothing could stop me.’ She clasped the match-box tightly between pink palms.

‘Of course not, Penny; but you’re not Jane; and you’re not in her place. You don’t know what you’d do—’

‘Yes, I do. Nothing could stop me. I’d smash the System. But I admire her just the same. She’s coming to take

me again. I'll go with her—anywhere. Only, Daddy, you never can escape from yourself, can you?’

‘Most of us are trying it much of the time. We want to get away from reality. We travel to escape it, rush hither and thither, thinking peace is yonder somewhere. We day-dream to escape, when we can't travel. We engage in study, art, music, politics, business, to escape. I write, to escape. You—go to the football rallies, and shout!’

‘I don't want to escape. I'm sure I'm satisfied where I am; but Jane's not.’ She said ‘Jane’ just like that, pat. Very womanly.

‘You haven't met serious complications yet, Penny, dear. I hope you never do, but you will. I rather think you will. We all do, sooner or later.’

‘Daddy, what's the matter with Mr. Bronze? He does not hang together, somehow. Jane says he's so sweet at home, and yet everybody says he's so wicked away from home.’

‘That hangs together. There are lots of men like that. They're perfectly charming everywhere but at business. They're genial, kindly, the most gracious hosts, best conversationalists, but they're bears in business.’

‘Why?’

‘Because, they think mistakenly, I believe, that that's the way to manage men, to play the game. Maybe they're right. That's the way coaches handle football players—fiercely. And soldiers. Maybe it's the only way to manage employees, and rivals in business. Only I believe there's another way. The way you manage a home.’

‘Couldn't he be psycho-analyzed?’

‘I suppose so. What put that into your head?’

‘Oh, I don't know, I've heard it's good to straighten one

out. By your dreams, you know. I sometimes have night-mares.'

'Well, everybody has them sometimes. When they come too often, perhaps it's an evidence one is fighting against one's self. Bill has always fought against himself. He's kind by nature. That shows in his voice. He is a gentleman by instinct, but a brigand in business. No doubt about that, he's a pirate. I've always liked Bill—'

'Even if he did take your girls away from you!'

'Yes, Penny.' Peter Weld laughed with her.

'Doesn't everybody fight against himself?'

'More or less. That's what life's all about, isn't it? To settle the controversy, to get one side or the other on top, to unify?'

'I don't think I fight much with myself, Daddy, now really.'

'I hope not, little dear. I hope you never have to. Maybe, though, your time for the scrap has not yet come.'

'You don't fight with yourself, do you, Peter?'

'You don't know how much.'

'You seem quite placid all the time.'

'Of course nobody knows himself. I've had my battles. I still have. I can't tell about them; I couldn't even if I were fully aware of them, which I'm not. Battles grow quieter, though, as we grow older. That's just natural. Old mother nature preparing us for sleep.'

'Oh, hush, Peter Weld.'

'I mean she begins preparing us a long way ahead for — for sleep. She begins when we pass the twenties. We grow every year more peaceful.'

'Have you heard any more from Mr. Powers? Did he get a job in the iron-works?'

'No. He's gone to Pittsburgh. He telephoned me he could not get in at the local mills. He's going to try the big ones. He said there was so much more doing there, anyway.'

Then for the first time Penny forgot her match-box. She sat quite still for a moment on the arm of her father's chair. Her face lost its vivid out-door color. Slowly she arose to her feet, unconsciously leaving the box on the table, and moved to a bookcase. She took down the volume of the encyclopedia she had opened yesterday and at last managed to speak:

'American labor needs a lot of guiding, doesn't it, Daddy?'

'Yes, and I think Powers has a lot of leadership in him.'

'You evidently think well of him. I do, too. I think I'll go to the football pep meeting tomorrow night. Ned Engren wanted me to, but I told him I couldn't. I believe, though, I'll go.'

Penny seldom troubled to tell her father of her plans ahead of time. Really she seemed thinking out loud. She did not appear to read anything in the article on 'Labor Unions,' but placed the book back on the shelf. Peter Weld, busy with his own thoughts of Hapwood Powers and his future, the coming revolution, Pittsburgh as a strategic center for work in the labor-union, idly toyed with the match-box and did not know what he was doing as he slid it open. He frowned when he saw in it a cigarette-stub not half-smoked, then smiling a little, as if with an effort, he said,

'Have you begun, Penny?'

'Begin what?'

She turned from the shelf and saw him bending over the open box, holding the quarter-smoked cigarette in his fingers.

'Smoking,' he said. 'Well, you've not gone at it strongly.'

'No.' Hastily Penny moved to the table and took the box. 'No, I'm sure I couldn't smoke a whole one, nor a half.'

Give it to me.' Her face now took on color enough. Peter surrendered the stub, but not before he had seen the brand printed upon it. Peter's mind held more light on the situation than he revealed to his daughter.

'Good night, Peter Weld.' She kissed the smooth spot on the back of his head, a pink island in a surf of white hair, as he kissed her hand. She had not intended to go so soon, but to have a good long chat with him; but the air grew too thick with conflicting emotions. She had to get out of that place, if she were not to betray her foolishness. She wished devoutly she were thirty, when you begin to grow placid.

Poor Penny! How could she dream that Happy Powers took her one-half as seriously as she took him and herself? She would not for the world let a soul know that she had done this childish thing. She preferred that her father should think she had taken to smoking like all the rest of the world of women. She thought for a moment of beginning with this very stub, the one his velvet lips had touched. He had forgotten, after lunch yesterday, to finish it, had let it die in his fingers, as he leaned across the dining-table listening absorbed to her father. Yes, her father had absorbed Happy's thoughts — not herself. She could not flatter herself now, not in the slightest degree. All his other stubs, and they were many, smoked to the last quarter-inch, she had tenderly deposited, after a little hesitation, in the fireplace of the library; but this one, that his fingers had held, and his lips had touched, she had reserved this one for memory. Now, with self-pity and an ache, she carried it upstairs to her room, thrust it to the back of a dresser drawer, saw it only now and then when cleaning, in the passage of the years, until at the end of a decade, she came across it, opened the box, and found only tiny brownish shreds of paper, with blackened crumbs of weed, smiled at it, started to throw it out of the

window to the south breeze of summer, but instead — put it back again where it had lain so long.

Meantime, Peter Weld, that night alone in the den, did not soon resume his manuscript, but sat with no smile upon his face, and said within himself, 'Not her, too! Not Penny too!'



June filled the air. Clambering roses, white, pink, red, colored the walls of Seminole. Elms heavily in leaf spanned the streets, and turned them into Gothic arches. Penny would have liked very well to play in the country, to swim in the lakes and streams as she had done in other summers; but she liked very well, too, the new experiences as a 'Saleslady' in the haberdashery department of Swann's. She met men there, many men, and a few women. Grown men, not boys.

The junior year of Penelope Weld had ended. Now sixteen, a senior, and a saleslady, all at once. Exhilarating! The last baseball game of Central High had played itself out. Penny had led the girls' section in the cheering. The last races had dashed into history. The last commencement had filled the great municipal Hall with ten thousand persons; white dresses, white flannel trousers and blue jackets had colored the vast platform; flowers everywhere. All over, and Penny a senior.

She had watched all winter the added efforts of Peter Weld, writing early and late, reading incessantly, magazines, papers, books. She tried to imagine him growing thin and wan, as he put forth added strength to earn more to help Chris; but she could not succeed. Peter looked well, gained flesh in spite of all his travel for lectures at constantly diminishing honoraria. 'Thrive on it, my dear,' he replied to her ex-

postulations. ‘We travelling men are a healthy bunch. And as for brain-fag, you’ve got it wrong. There is no such animal. Brains don’t tire. They may vegetate and rot, but never tire. Nobody uses much more than half his brain-power. Anyone who talks about brain-fatigue poses, that’s all.’

Anyway, Penny felt she should help, should work, seek employment for the summer; and, since the nation seemed entering upon prosperous years, she found little difficulty, after a few days of effort, in securing a foothold in the biggest department store in Seminole. She brazenly gave her age as eighteen, and looked the part. What did it matter? Nobody’s business how old or how young she might be. She’d do the job. Perhaps her fresh youth, her arch languor, and the use she did not hesitate to make of big blue, Irish eyes under her brown hair with the glint of copper in it, determined the counter where she should serve. Men like a certain dignity with eyes that appear unafraid, sometimes even — what would you say — ah, prehensile. Only once that summer did Penny break into an inward rage, carefully concealed, but very fierce. Many occasions of annoyance came along, of course, as in everybody’s life; but respect, even deference, she had met, for the most part, from customers and fellow-employees. A very assured man-about-town, or one who thought himself entitled to that rank, after some significant speeches repeated over a period of a fortnight, during which he felt he had made progress along his well-learned ‘line,’ sprang upon her his climax of poetry. He told her she had ‘bedroom’ eyes. He awoke a volcano. A flash and a burning, withering fire. Blue turned into black; black seemed red. He never came back to that counter while she stood there.

Jane came now and then. Easy to appear selecting neck-

wear for her father, though she knew nobody could select anything for William Bronze except William Bronze himself. In reality Jane came unashamed for news of Chris, did not hesitate to let Penny see that her heart ached for Chris, yearned for Chris. She denied all other masculine interest except in Chris. Yes, she occasionally went out with some other man, always in a company, dined or danced with other men, but always under the direct or indirect surveillance of her father, and never found herself more than two or three times in company with the same man, young or mature. She showed a perplexed amusement over the ingenuity of that guiding hand that knew so well how to shape her movements and her life. She could not see that her father planned all her goings and comings for her, or even paid attention to them, except for the actual results. Something uncanny about it. Rare skill!

Now and then she came for Penny at five o'clock to drive the working girl home. She took an hour to do it. She came the day Harding had stopped in Seminole. She had acted on the reception committee for Mrs. Harding. She had stood in the line and watched the wearied, harassed, pathetic President at the public reception in Stalker's Hotel, shaking hands. How listless! How bored! How apprehensive! Jane did not know that her own father caused much of the fear under which the head of the nation labored. She did not know that Bill Bronze would travel to the northwest with the President, would dog his steps clear up to Alaska, would bob up every morning even aboard ship and face the President when that powerful ruler came out to get a breath of fresh morning air. She did not know that Bill Bronze owned some worthless lands in Nebraska, or was it Dakota, or maybe Montana, supposed to be adjacent to a place called Teapot Dome, which Bill Bronze desired the United States

to acquire at a fabulous sum — for the good of the United States, oh, yes, solely for the good of his beloved country — and had determined not to leave the President until he achieved the end designed, even if it meant the end of the President as well.

Jane had gone to the Park that afternoon where the President was to raise a flag with a speech; but the report had it the President suffered from sunburn incurred the previous day by riding in an open car in another city; so the postmaster general came instead, and Mrs. President. Jane had sat on the platform and listened to both. Afterward she drove back to the city for Penny. Then she drove to the Park again and looked at the vacant grandstand, the flag, and the vacant greensward where the populace had stood. Penny got out to stretch her legs. She had jammed them together all day on the hard floors in the haberdashery and the cartilages ached for the elasticity of the turf. She felt inclined to run about, roll on the grass, turn handsprings, as she might have done a year ago; but now she reminded herself of her seniorhood, eighteen-year-old-hood — in reality only sixteen, but playing the rôle night and day of eighteen — and her saleslady-hood. She kept her rather tall dignity, and returned to the car and the girl lost in reverie.

Jane told Penny of the day's events and learned what little she could concerning Chris. That young reporter had at last landed a job on one of the smaller New York papers. He had been nearly a year doing it, and had subsisted on what little space-rates he could gather in and on his father's hard-won contributions. Now he could make his own way, and neither girl doubted he was off and gone. Jane showed the hardening effect of her disappointment in love. She almost shocked Penny by her cynicism. Her views of life

and its purposes, like grass cut from its roots and cast on a river, floated aimlessly, and seemed about to sink.

‘Why don’t you do some kind of public work, Jane?’

‘I do. All I can find to do. I’m in the Junior League up to my ears. I go to the Day Nursery and bottle the babies. I go to the Hospital for Crippled Children. I take all the lessons that one can accumulate, French, Spanish, piano, singing. I sublimate, Penny, I assure you I sublimate with a vengeance. I appreciate sublimation. I have an intimate acquaintance with it, and I shall continue it till I die. I shall devote my life to it.’ Jane appeared not one year older, but five. Bitterness crept not merely into her speech but into her face — and hardness. She explained to Penny how she seemed caught in the currents of her life and whirled round. If she could have hated somebody or something and could strike in self-defense, she might feel better; but she did not hate her father, could not; she did not even hate the System, the environment, the privilege, and the luxury in which she had grown up. How could she? So much a part of herself all the ease, all the open doors, all the power to command service and respect and even adulation. She could indeed imagine herself deprived of her position and reduced to the status of a flat-dweller or a cottage dweller. As far as she herself personally was concerned, she could be happy in a farm-house with Chris; she knew that; but how about her responsibility to her father and mother, the traditions of her kind, the part she had been set to play in the world? Love and duty conflicted, the same old impasse.

‘And there’s Richard, my brother — ’

‘Yes,’ Penny said, ‘why not leave him to carry on the tradition?’

‘He doesn’t want to. Richard is a real rebel. Already he sees what he believes to be wrong in the System. He would

break loose if he could. He's just graduated, and has learned all sorts of economics. He talks a lot about the rights of the masses. Makes father furious, though he controls his rage. I can see Dad's neck swell and go red. Even his eyes go red. Now and then he breaks loose about Dick's drivel, calls it "poppy-cock" but generally he keeps quiet and lets Richard spout. He knows how to handle people tactfully, Daddy does. Some day he'll put the screws on Dick, if he has to. Dick must carry on, you see, all of father's interests.'

'And doesn't want to?'

'No. But he'll have to. He's caught, too, in the currents.'

'What does he want to do?'

'He'd like to manage father's affairs, all right enough, the steel mill, the newspaper, the oil and mining business, everything for the benefit of the workers, what he calls the proletariat. Fancy it.'

'Well, why not? I think I'd like Dick.'

'You would. Only he's so impractical. I think experience will knock his hare-brained ideas out of his head. At least father thinks so.'

'Maybe not. Maybe he's the type for the revolution and fortunately with the power to — to do things.'

'Revolution? What do you mean? Communism? Surely you're not a red, Penny? Or your father? Or Chris?'

'No. Father does not believe in that kind of revolution, but a gradual one, bloodless, you know.'

'Painless surgery, eh?' Jane sat sideways in her car seat, regarding Penny out of astonished eyes.

'Something of the sort. I don't just understand. He thinks something ought to be done, and will be done. Says forces are moving us like a glacier, glacial forces, very slow but very sure.'

‘That’s just the way Richard talks. He’s very radical and reckless. He calls himself a red, a parlor bolshevik, a communist. It drives father nearly crazy. I can see that. Only Dick laughs so much that even Dad can’t tell when he’s joking. He’s half-in-earnest all the time though, yes, I believe wholly in earnest.’

‘Is Richard — ah — what does he look like?’

‘Look here, Penny. I’m going to send him to Swann’s to buy a tie, and tell him to look you up.’

‘Don’t!’ Penny flushed, and meant ‘Do.’ And Jane knew it.

* *

A hot August night but, despite perspiration, Peter Weld bent over his lap-board, writing. Penny came into the den, dropped down into a wicker chair by a window, and fanned herself with the nearest thing at hand, a copy of a none-too-popular weekly review.

‘Like an oven in the store all day. I’m all in.’

‘Why do you keep it up, Penny? Chris is taking care of himself all right now. Why not quit work and take a month with your Aunt Elizabeth in the country?’

‘No, Daddy. I’m enlisted for the war; and besides, I’m having a great time, learning more than I’m earning.’

‘I know. You always say that. But school begins the middle of September, and your senior year, and you’ve had no rest.’

‘Complete change of work. You always say that’s rest.’

‘Within limits, yes. But you don’t have to work. Women who don’t have to work shouldn’t. It takes jobs away from the men.’

‘Why, Daddy, you know well you believe everybody

should work. In the ideal state, all should work, men and women alike.'

' If only we had the ideal state, yes, but we haven't. Until the state takes hold of industry, and organizes it for the benefit of the many and therefore needs all hands to work, we shall continue to have more workers than jobs. If all women who do not actually have to work in order to eat would give up their jobs, unemployed men could take the places. There's enough unemployment even in these prosperous times. Too many women are working just for dress-money, pin-money, luxury money.'

' Well, that money goes into trade, into circulation.'

' Yes I know, child, but it could also go into bread and meat and potatoes for those who haven't now got these things.'

' Not a great deal of unemployment, is there, Daddy? Not really?'

' No, nothing to what is coming later on. Then it will be actually wrong for any woman who can avoid it to work. Many companies are preparing to discharge all women who have men to support them. Women should keep house—'

' Now, don't use those old words, the woman's place is the home. Not you, Peter Weld! '

' No. I don't say that. Not when the state shall control industry and commerce. Then we can't produce too much, nor consume too much. Everybody will get what he needs, and standards of living will go up. Women will be needed to help produce and help consume. But that time has not come yet.'

' You really think, Daddy, it is my duty to stop? My duty to society? '

' No, I don't say that, my dear. Conditions are not yet bad

enough, probably will not be for some time. We'll have some fat years of post-war prosperity, or supposed prosperity, false prosperity. Until the slump comes, it really is not an ethical question, I suppose, whether you work or not. But the time will come when the question will become a moral one.'

'Then I may go ahead working with a good conscience? You know, Peter, you're my conscience.'

'Terrifying responsibility! Please be your own conscience, Penny.'

'But conscience is all a matter of education, isn't it? You're my educator.'

'That isn't all of conscience. There's an element of the absolute, the intuitive, a sense of essential rightness or wrongness, that we all have.'

'There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so.' I've heard you quote that statement a thousand times.' Penny laughed challengingly.

'That statement, too, has its limitations. Doesn't everything? True, the essential rightness or wrongness of a thing often depends upon one's conscience in the matter, one's thinking about the matter. It is far more damaging to oneself to do a thing that goes against one's convictions of right and wrong than if the thing does not go against one's views. But that does not affect the absolute standard.'

'Well, what is the absolute standard?'

'Ah, there you're boring deep, Penny, my dear. The good of our fellows? The welfare of society? The growth and development of oneself? Something like that, I imagine. You know the only sin is the refusal to grow.'

'Why, Daddy, you can grow by doing all sorts of bad things. Experience is growth, isn't it? Well, let's have all the experiences in order to grow! Let's eat, drink, tread the primrose path — to grow!'

‘ Do you think you really grow, or perhaps stunt your growth, by indulgence of one sort or another?’ said Peter.

‘ And there’s Bill Bronze. Hasn’t he grown, despite the wicked things he’s done, maybe because of them?’

‘ How much more he’d have grown if he’d done better things? No, think it over, Penny. It seems to me our objective in the world is to grow.’

‘ A cannibal can grow, eating his fellows.’

‘ Really grow? Or only get fat?’

‘ Oh, you can out-argue me, Peter Weld. But I think I’ll keep on working until your slump comes along. If it ever does. Seems to me business is very good at the old stand. Daddy, have you heard anything of your friend, that young bolshevik who was here nearly a year ago, what was his name? Happy — something?’

‘ You mean young Powers? Yes, he writes me occasionally. He’s working in the Bethlehem Steel Mills, and agitating among the Communists. I don’t think he’s an out-and-out Red; but he says nobody else but the Communist is for the real social-democratic state. He — ah — he’s married, by the way, to a girl Communist.’

‘ So?’ Penny managed to speak with indifference, real or assumed. She arose and walked to the window, looking out at the gridiron patterns of the August moon through the branches.

Richard

Richard Bronze had always ordered tailored shirts and hand-made ties; but he changed. He came at least once a week to Swann's, during most of that summer in which national prosperity reigned, to purchase this and that, and always idled about until Miss Weld disposed of any customer she might have on hand. Just out of college, just entering on a career in the offices of his father's steel mill, and extremely democratic in his social views, he proved quick on the up-take when his sister dropped the suggestion that he introduce himself to Miss Penelope Weld. Furthermore, he had not yet found time and inclination to fasten the stormy predilections of youth upon any fair maid of Seminole. He had left a 'college widow' behind 'neath the elms; but, since she had been a widow before, what harm had he done?

The second week in September, he had needed more ties and studs than ever before and industriously came every day, usually in mid-afternoon when he thought business would be slack; for the next week Penny Weld, he knew, would in stately fashion be treading the halls of Central High, a senior and no longer a saleslady; and how could he manage to look often enough into those big eyes with their frank flirtatious interest in mankind? He astonished himself by his own interest in this mere school girl. He had never found one before with an idea in her head. He had never found any girl intriguing except those a year or two older than himself. What made this Miss Penelope Weld seem so mature? Sixteen, ye gods! She looked eighteen, and she talked twenty-

three. Where did she get those daring social views? From her father, of course, that Peter Weld. Richard had read some of his stuff. Now there was a writer! Richard meant to show him and the world, given his chance, what a rich man's son could do to help usher in the new era, the social state, the square deal for the working man. Aha! He would make a path to the door of Peter Weld, and thereby gain guidance in social theory and a chance to look again into those big violet eyes — or were they brown, or gray, or blue? By George, that's funny. Can't remember the color of those eyes. Can remember the feel of them, though, bet your life on that!

He had tried in vain to 'date' Penny. Tried for permission to take her home in his swanky roadster. Tried for the privilege of addressing her as Penelope, not to say Penny, anything but Miss Weld. Knowing little or nothing of her brother Chris and the unhappy affair with his sister Jane — that affair had come to its climax in November of last year while Dick was away in college — he stood nonplused at the steady rejection by Miss Weld of all his attempts at closer acquaintance. Not like a school girl, a saleslady, any young woman at all. Not as if she did not know all about him. Son of William Bronze, Yale A. B., member of the glee club, and Bones. No criminal. No rotter. Boyish escapades. A widow back in New Haven, but all according to the code. Not a thing in his record to his discredit. Yet she held him off to a chatting acquaintance of almost a strictly business character. Queer sort of girl. Maybe that's why she's so damned attractive.

He stood apparently looking at a lay-out of linen, but in reality mostly at her. That September morning a thunder-shower had cooled the air, and he chose to come while the thermometer stood at seventy-five rather than in the after-

noon when it probably would shoot up at least to ninety. Maybe she might respond to the freshness of the air. She didn't. He said:

‘ You’re a queer bird! Why don’t you let me date you? Only a little date? You’re a brown-thrush, a mocker, a cardinal, all the shy birds rolled into one.’

‘ And you — are a naturalist! ’

‘ But I’ve got no net, no lime. I’m a photographing naturalist. I only want to take your picture.’

‘ Haven’t you done that yet? Plenty of chances.’

‘ I don’t like the setting. I don’t like shelves and showcases behind and before you! I want to catch you wild. Out in the woods, or even on the walk at your home, between the gate and the — the bird house.’

‘ Kind of you. Really, though, I’m just a school girl. My father — ’

‘ Would he let me date him? ’ he spoke with eagerness. ‘ I’ll take his picture. Maybe you’d be flitting in or flitting out. Is your father guileless? ’

‘ He’s pretty wise. He’s an owl.’

‘ Then how did you become a mocker? That’s what you are, a mocker! But honestly, now, would your father give me a little of his time? ’

‘ He’s the most generous person about his time. He would be honored by your visit. He always thanks people who come to see him, particularly if they’re young. But let me warn you, he’d not agree with you, and he’d tell you exactly what he thinks. He’s impersonal in his views. Absolutely. He’d tell you what’s wrong with the world — America in particular — and you, as an illustration.’

‘ How me? ’

‘ Well — ah — I can’t discount his words in advance. He’d denounce you, though, in calm but unmeasured terms.’

‘What have I done? I’m no cad, Miss Weld. Honestly I’m not.’ He lost his bantering tone for a split-second.

‘I know. You’re — you’re a very — very — swell guy.’ Penny lost her poise momentarily, and flushed at the impulsive words. She meant them, too. He stood there oblivious of the pile of linens and gazed at her with boyish honesty. Undoubtedly she found him good to look at, with his thick blondish hair, his little brown moustache, a quarter of an inch worth on each side of his nose, his high color, inherited from William Bronze, his close-knit figure, tough as hickory — at college he had done something on the track — his modish clothes without the pronounced checks his father fancied. Much like his father, oh, much; but a swell guy.

‘Then what would he denounce me for? My record’s clean. Honest it is, Penel — pardon, Miss Weld!’

‘Impersonal, I tell you. He does not approve of — well, you’ll find out, if you ever talk with him.’

‘You tell me. This is cruelty to animals.’

‘He’d soften it, though, and I don’t know how.’

‘Well, out with it. Give me the works — and the worst.’

‘No, I can’t. Don’t know how.’

‘I’m going to see him, by God. If he’ll let me in. Say, shall I call up and make an appointment?’

‘Yes. Or meet him casually at the University Club. He lunches there nearly every day.’ Penny grew uneasy, and felt that she was establishing an understanding, a conspiracy. And wasn’t she? ‘I suppose you don’t care for these dress-shirts?’ She began putting the shining white bosoms back into green boxes.

‘Oh, yes, I do. They’re lovely — I mean you’re lovely. I mean they’ll do. Send a dozen, please. And I think you’re damn cruel, and lovely!’



‘I agree with all you’ve said, Mr. Weld.’ Richard sat in the library, not yet in the den, at the little Weld bungalow. He had accosted Peter at the Club the previous day, and had suggested the four o’clock hour in the afternoon, thinking Penelope would surely be about the place. If so, however, she had entered by the kitchen door and had made never a footfall as she went up the stairs or wherever she kept herself. Richard’s ears were cocked and set on the hair-trigger. At least until Peter Weld began giving him the works about the System, of which Richard’s father was the local king pin and Richard himself bade fair to become no obscure cog. Surely Peter Weld did it calmly. Impersonal was the right word. The whole structure of business as conducted by William Bronze and his confreres in America leaned ‘catawampus,’ creaked and groaned with injustice, greed, profits, outrageous profits for the few, wages far too low for the many, dividends too small for the little stockholders, increasing and unwieldy plants for over-production and nobody to consume the output, plethoric paper fortunes for the fifty-three or ninety-five growing every day more swollen. Disaster coming. Rankly immoral, the whole business edifice.

‘I agree, Mr. Weld; but what is anybody to do? Myself, for instance? I got all that from Irving Fisher and others, got it between the eyes. I believe every word of it. But — I’m helpless. I can’t move hand or foot.’

‘Of course you can’t. I know perfectly well how you are entangled in the System. Some day, however, you’ll be in control.’

‘What can I do then? The big machine runs of itself.’

‘Certainly; but it will not run forever. A crash is bound to come. Then your opportunity will come with it.’

‘ Is there nothing to do meantime? Haven’t you any suggestion?’

‘ Can you influence your father?’

‘ Can you? Can anybody?’

‘ I’ve never been able to.’ Peter smiled and shook his head. ‘ I’ve talked with him many times. Now and then he sends for me to come to his office at the mill or at the paper. We go over the same old ground. I’ve told him all I’ve told you, a hundred times. He just laughs at me. Seems to like me to tell him so he can laugh. I’m a sort of court-jester to him. Privileged fool, and all that.’

‘ I can imagine.’ Richard looked at the floor between his feet, humiliated. This rugged old fellow with the white hair and the ruddy face, he was nobody’s fool. By rights he should be sitting in a mighty seat, dispensing justice, but instead he was only a penny-a-liner. Truly the social structure sat upside down, sat or teetered, a pyramid on its apex. Unscientific bunglers like Bill Bronze on top, technical experts like Peter Weld on the bottom. Richard himself, like a helpless Hamlet — yes, worse than Hamlet — not born to set it right. He added:

‘ Suppose I could influence him, what then?’

‘ Really I don’t know that he could do much alone. He’d have to get the others of the ninety-five to join him, and they wouldn’t.’

‘ Join him in what?’

‘ In the total reconstruction of business and its methods. Growth of willingness to operate for reasonable profits with high wages voluntarily given, to enable the workers to buy the products of the factories, shorter hours to enable them to use the products, leisure and the culture of leisure. Idyllic, I know, even millennial; and not to be come at by the willing-

ness of the big business men. Never while men are men will they do such a thing except under compulsion.'

'No. Never.' Dick saw that, but with the directness of youth he continued. 'I see no way to bring it about except by force, violence, red revolution.'

'I think other ways will be found. Anglo-Saxons make poor revolutionists; and the leadership here and in England is still predominantly Anglo-Saxon. Democracy has been their way ever since King John. I think it will continue.'

'I don't see how democracy can do the job.'

'Not until we reach severe straits. I think I see them coming. Business is not so wise as it thinks itself. The Hamiltonian doctrine of the fitness of the few rich and able men to lead and rule, which has been the doctrine of America for many decades, served all right when we had our frontiers. In the frontier times when things got too depressed and perplexing, all the Hamiltonians had to do was to open up another strip of public land for the dissatisfied to preëmpt and occupy, and then build an escape community. Now there's no more public land out yonder'—he waved his hand toward the west—'no way of escape from reality for rebellious hearts, no opportunity for the young and restless to rise. Opportunity! Land of opportunity! All that is over and done with. What young and ambitious boy can any longer aspire to the managership or the presidency of his concern? You yourself couldn't unless you were born into it. No matter what your talents. And, pardon me, I believe them to be above the average.'

Richard winced inwardly. 'Above the average!' Was that the best that could be said of him? His grades at college—well above the average, despite all outside activities. He believed his mind and personality not merely above but far above the average. Well, he'd show Peter Weld, some day.

What the hell difference did it make what Peter Weld thought? And yet somehow he craved this old man's good opinion. Oh, yes, Penelope! For an hour he had not thought of the girl. No, he felt sure it was not on account of her that he desired this professorial old doctrinaire to think well of him. There appeared something commanding about that bushy white head and those Wellingtonian features. For the present, then, he'd have to be content with 'above the average.' After all, not half bad for a first interview. Where's that girl, anyway? Nearly six o'clock and not a sound in the place except the steady talk of Peter Weld. Did they never dine here? Who got the evening meal? There was no maid about. And Penelope didn't look like the delicatessen type. There seemed no help for it. He'd have to go away with his thumbs in his mouth. He knew by this time that all he had to do was to prod Peter with a question and out would pour a lecture. Therefore he said:

‘Then how do you think things will ever be changed?’

‘Not by armed force, but by economic force. The business men will run their heads into a noose, a cul-de-sac, an impossible situation. They're doing it as fast as they can. All this apparent prosperity is hollow, false; this American isolation, unnatural, impossible. They're riding for a fall. They'll come a cropper. They'll crash. Then they'll ask somebody for help.’

‘But who? I mean whom?’

‘The government. What is a government for? To help the people, the business boys and all the other boys, when they can no longer manage. This country's big enough, rich enough, strong enough, to feed, clothe and make prosperous and happy every mother's son in it. The government must regulate business, give everybody a chance.’

‘You mean help the little fellows to run their businesses?’

All the tendency is to consolidation. Chains — hotels, drug-stores, groceries, newspapers — chains everywhere.'

'Yes, and that cannot be stopped. It will increase rather than diminish. Machines will increase. Business will increase in size and concentration; but its profits to any group or any one man will diminish. Government will see to that and create more even distribution of wealth, of the goods of production.'

'Ha! State socialism. Well, I'm for it! I'm a Communist, in fact; I think I am.' Richard smote his well creased trousers.

Peter Weld smiled as he replied a bit indulgently, 'No you're not, I think. You can't well be, coming of the stock you do. Besides in this country communism won't wash. It never will. A very mild form of state socialism is all that will come in my time, even in yours.'

Richard did have to put his thumbs into his mouth and go away.



'Sis, that Weld girl is as skittish as a fawn.'

'Ever try to catch a fawn, Richard?' inquired Jane.

'No. Why?'

'Then why don't you dig up your similes out of your own experience?'

'Well, that's just an expression —'

'Try something original, then.' Jane smiled at him. They had just finished dinner, and Jane had walked toward the piano, Richard following her. It was their first chance for private conversation since Dick had come home from Peter Weld's.

'Besides,' said Jane, 'the comparison is not good. A fawn is curious, even if shy, and can be caught, coaxed, petted, and

tamed. A full-grown deer is much less manageable. She's only a child, and — better leave her alone.'

'Child nothing! She's a young woman of the world, and as sophisticated as our provincial city can produce.'

'Better leave her alone.'

'Why? I can't see.'

'They are not our kind, our class, our stratum. The Welds are not for the Bronzes. Anybody would think it a strange coincidence that you should fall for a Weld, but it's not at all. That's the way it happens. Families mix up and brothers and sisters fall in love with brothers and sisters. You had better leave her alone.'

From the bitterness of her tone, and the plural names, Richard gathered that some trouble lay under her words, of which he had not yet learned. He said,

'Why did Chris leave here and go east?'

'To get a bigger job, a better chance — oh, Richard, he went because of me.'

'Ah, I see. The old man wouldn't stand for it! Why, he wouldn't stand for your marrying anybody. He wouldn't stand for the far-darting Apollo! Whyn't you tell me, Sis, old girl?'

'Never a real chance, or rather a real need, till now. I was a fool to tell you to go and see Penny. I might have known you'd fall for her. Anybody would. Especially a Bronze. Oh, Dick, I'm so miserable. Don't get into the same fix.'

'Poor old girl! I'm sorry. Love him, don't you, Jane?'

'Yes. And it's no good.'

'Why don't you bust loose and go to him? I would.'

'Yes, you would, wouldn't you? You're asking me?'

'Well, why not? Is it any different for me because I'm a man and you're a woman?'

'Of course. You could manage the business no matter

whom you married. All I could do would be to pull down things if I married the wrong man. I've got to help hold up the organization, the ruling class. I've got to marry one of the American barons, if I marry at all. You know, Dick, I think you're right. Dad doesn't want me to marry at all. He could use me in a trade, no doubt. Trade me off for a partnership or a deal of some sort. But I don't believe he even wants to do that. People say he loves nothing but a dollar, but you and I know better than that.'

'What are you going to do, then, with your life—as the preacher says in the baccalaureate?' Richard tried to mask deep feeling with a nervous joking manner.

'What can I do? Nothing.'

'That's why you're going in for all the lessons in this and that, and all the baby clinics and things?'

'You guessed it the first time, wise young man.'

'I'm sorry, old girl. I'm terribly sorry. I'd kiss you if you wouldn't cry.'

'I certainly would. So don't. Here comes Dad.'

William Bronze strode into the library-music-room, which appeared twenty yards long and nearly as broad, with his easy rolling stride but as if he was going somewhere and knew exactly where, a sheaf of newspapers under his arm. He walked toward a leather easy chair and said, 'Play, Jane. Play us something. Don't you agree, Richard? Or were you settling important problems?' He glanced at them with a condescending smile, but with just a glint of suspicion.

'Problems of life and death, yes. Death and life in the jungle.' Richard had a boyish way of attempting humor, nervous, laughing humor to hide an uncertainty of himself and his footing. His attempts often missed fire, carried obscurity so that no one felt like laughing except himself; and

neither did he, though he laughed just the same. His sister always thought, 'Poor boy. Dear boy.'

'What is the weighty question? Maybe I can settle it for you.' Mr. Bronze spoke with his most paternal assurance.

'I was just asking Jane what she thought of Peter Weld. You know him, of course, Dad, you were little boys and girls together, weren't you?'

William Bronze did not catch his frown quickly enough to prevent its appearance momentarily on the surface; but he wiped it off with an enforced smile, and said,

'Yes, I know him. Esteem him highly, as such chaps go. A dreamer. Impossible idealist, impractical. Where did you run into him?'

'At the University Club. He's a rum old guy. He has a good head on him, I'd say.'

'Did you talk with him much?'

'Yes, a couple of hours.'

Bill Bronze did not sit down at once as he had evidently intended, but moved over to the book-shelves on the south side of the room, farthest from the piano. The books looked as they ought to look, no sets, all shiny and alike, but good man-handled books with individuality, some of them rare and costly, to be sure, but not laid in by contract and by the cubic foot.

'Two hours? This is not Saturday.' Mr. Bronze spoke softly but with a keen edge, as he half-turned his face to Richard standing by the piano. A quick flush mounted to the very fair cheek of the boy.

'I cleared my desk, all right.'

'You're not a good example to the others, however. Some day you'll have to be the first and the last at your desk.'

Dick's face by this time flamed, as he took the castiga-

tion, none the less stinging for the mild tone of it. He answered,

‘That time hasn’t come. And I think we all work too hard, produce too much, would be better off every way with more leisure.’

‘That sounds like Peter Weld. The less you have to do with his sort the better, especially in your formative period. He’s not a good influence for a man who has to lead, as you’ll have to do some day. I talk with him at times, as an amusement and for auld lang syne, but his talk doesn’t affect me. I’m too well grounded. I’d advise you to let persons of that sort alone.’

William Bronze turned from the shelves, as he uttered the word ‘persons,’ and swept Jane as well as Richard with a glance that was like the inclusive flash of a scythe. All the time his lips smiled while his words cut. Then in a tone of finality, he waved a hand, sat down in a chair, and said, ‘Chopin, please, Jane.’



Jane played for half an hour, while Richard lounged about from one tier of shelves to another and absently handled books, glancing now and then at his father who minutely scanned the final afternoon edition, done in salmon pink. Then Jane arose, suddenly, and walked out saying, ‘Sorry, Daddy. I’ve got to go.’ Richard saw the gesture with which she pressed her handkerchief to her lips, before Mr. Bronze himself looked up and asked, ‘Are you going out?’

‘No. To my room, that’s all. I’ve got to—’ Jane had gone. She could not have uttered another word. Richard knew it.

‘I’d like to talk to you further about Mr. Weld, Dad. If you’re through with the paper?’

‘I’m never through, son, but what about Weld?’

‘I think he’s a — he’s a swell guy.’ Richard knew this was a lame beginning.

‘No doubt.’ His father did not help him.

‘He thinks business does not know which side its bread is buttered on, is cutting its own throat, and all that. He thinks isolation and intense nationalism are choking off foreign trade. The few are taking enormous profits, and sacrificing the many. Prosperity can’t be built on the poverty of the lower classes and all that.’

‘Yes? It sounds familiar. Peter Weld and men like him have talked to me sufficiently to acquaint me with their patter.’

‘It’s not just patter, Dad, if you don’t mind my contradicting you.’

Mrs. Bronze came in at this point, a little cast-iron woman, iron-gray hair, angular hands, elbows, shoulders, iron as to color and consistency, with a touch of rust which, together with the blondness of her husband, had gone into the complexion of her son Richard to produce, oddly enough, his ruddiness. Jane, by a former marriage, was almost as dark as her mother. Iron in Mrs. Bronze’s blood, too, no doubt, to mate with the toughness of Bill Bronze. She approached her husband with slippers in her hands. Yes, old-fashioned slippers in the old-fashioned manner. She said,

‘You’re not going out, eh? Very well. Put up your feet.’ She knelt on a hassock, as William Bronze elevated his feet to her hands, and she began loosening his spats and low-cut shoes.

‘Let me, Mums,’ began Richard.

‘No, no, Son. Let it alone. I’ll ’tend to Daddy’s slippers.’

Bill Bronze looked on indifferently and wiggled his silk-clad toes before they disappeared beneath the brown Russia

leather. Just another bit of the court-formality of the years. He replied to Richard after a time.

‘Patter it is. I ought to know.’

‘It seems to me it has sense in it. We can’t live to ourselves, big as this country is. Trade is necessary, like life-blood. We need raw materials and we need to get rid of our production. All the economics men at Yale agreed on that. Fisher most of all.’

‘Professors! We’ve had enough of school-teachers.’

‘Yes, but Dad, these men give their lives to studying such things.’

‘I don’t see how you got your reformer ideas. Never got them from me.’

‘No. I got them in college.’

‘I knew I oughtn’t to have let you go. Colleges ruin more boys! You weren’t born to these bolshevik notions. Nor trained to ’em at home. You—but I went in for the international stuff at first. I followed Taft in his League to Enforce Peace, put the paper behind Wilson, with all four feet, until—well, until I saw we were mistaken. You know it is just possible to be mistaken. A wise man admits his mistakes; a fool, never.’

‘Isn’t it just possible you were mistaken when you thought you were mistaken? Maybe you were right at first.’

‘No. I’ve threshed it all out. I was mistaken. Now I know I’m right. America first, last, all the time. America for Americans. Buy American. Sell American. Let the rest stew in their own juice.’

‘Dad, that’s provincial—and partisan.’

‘You know I’m not partisan. I contribute to both parties, and I support whatever candidates I think best for the city, state, and nation.’

‘You mean the best for you and your purposes, don’t you, Dad?’

‘Yes, because I’m always for the best interests of the masses. They don’t know what’s good for them. Whatever is best for the big leaders is best for the masses. The ruling class, the men at the top, should shape things. That’s the divine right of kings. All that sort of thing. There’s something in it. The few men of wealth, intelligence, and strength—they should rule. That’s the way things are, and they’re going to stay that way. And you, my boy, belong among that few, that ruling class.’

Richard got up from the chair near his father and moved to an open window where the lace curtains blew inward with the cool September night-wind. His father watched his back while Richard spoke in conciliatory voice:

‘I don’t like the ring of that doctrine, Dad. I’m sorry to differ with you; but as I see it, the few are not divinely commissioned to rule, except for the good of the many, and when chosen by the many to rule in their behalf. The greatest good to the greatest number, and the rulership of unselfish servants, that’s the right principle. All that—’

‘All that is sheer nonsense. It’s unworkable. What benefits the few, the rulers, indirectly benefits the many.’

‘That’s a worn out theory. It’s the theory of the barons and the czars, in my opinion.’

‘Listen, boy. Get this straight. Society is a pack of wolves. They’ll all try to get you, and get what you’ve got. It’s up to you to get them first. Bite quickest. Get the other fellow before he has time to get you. Get him by the front leg, the flank, or the throat, but get him. If you don’t, he’ll get you. When you look at a group or a crowd of men, say to yourself, “How can I use this one? How can I beat that

one? How can I grab hold on this one to make him serve my turn?" That's the only practical attitude.'

'The jungle!' Dick turned from the window to look at his father, thinking that for the first time William Bronze had taken off his mask before his son and revealed his life-creed. 'I'll say this, Dad, that's pretty frank.'

'Yes, I don't know how to dissemble.' And in the very words, tone, manner, William Bronze revealed that few could beat him at dissembling.

'So you don't believe in promoting the good of the masses at all? You believe only in unalloyed selfishness? They shall take who have the power, and they shall keep who can? That it?'

'Yes, and that works best for the whole mass. Intelligent selfishness is the best motive in life and benefits all others that one reaches. A mother is selfish in spending herself unselfishly for her children, because she'd be unhappy if she didn't. She gets the most good for herself by her apparent unselfishness. It's so with all of us.'

'That's the behaviorist psychology and the worst kind of *laissez faire* economics. One is dated, and the other not yet proved.'

'I don't know any of that scientific gibberish, my son, but I've just figured these things out for myself.'

'Dad, I can't build my life on those principles. Maybe I'd better go away and work for somebody else. I can't follow you in these things. I'd better escape somewhere.' Dick gesticulated toward the open window.

'Nonsense, Dick, dear boy,' his father, his own assurance shaken, and something inside of him quivering with a strange fear, used his most ingratiating tone. 'You may follow your own bent while working with me, and if, when I'm gone and you take my place, you have not worked out

the same philosophy for yourself, then follow your own inclinations; but I think you'll agree with me by that time.'

'I never will.' Richard spoke with evident grief. 'And I don't see how, if I rise in the business in the meantime, we can ever work together. Our ideas will—will clash.'

'But I'll be in command.' A certain cutting edge entered into the dulcet voice.

'I know it. And—and maybe I can't obey.'

'You'll have no trouble, son.' Now the edge was sheathed again. 'I'll give you all possible freedom of action—consistently, that is, with the whole plan and not to wreck discipline. And I'm sure that experience will ripen you and—and change you. Remember, you're really just a boy yet. Only, I'd advise you to keep away from Peter Weld. I can talk with him without danger of his upsetting me, but you're—you're too young and impressionable. It's natural, it's right, for youth to have these ideals and—ah—dreams. I did, myself.' Richard wondered when. 'But I got over them pretty early. It's a hard world, Dick, an iron-hard world. You'll become equal to it. You've got the health, the leather-stomach, the will, you've got everything. And you're going to have the scepter in your hand, ready for use. You're born to the purple.'

Quickly Bill Bronze saw that this language of royalty rubbed Richard the wrong way, and shifted the strategy, as he continued:

'You'll be in a place to serve the public for the public good. You'll have very great power and influence. You can reform many things that are not to your liking. You'll have the tools to build according to your own plans. There are not many young men with such a chance, handed right over to them. Some day you'll be absolute master, absolutely in command. As I see it, your duty and opportunity are

plain. Learn the game fully, from the ground up, every crook and turn of it. Then when your time comes, you'll play it wonderfully. But keep away from Peter Weld, don't waste time, work hard, and set a good example to everybody in the organization. It's a great game, Richard, old fellow, this game of business. You'll play it to a fare-you-well.'

* * *

It is never easy to fathom the rationalization of young minds, but it seems doubly difficult to follow the ins and outs of the mental state which led Richard Bronze to get so drunk on Hallowe'en. He had not done the like for a year and a half, and then only to celebrate the passing of a junior year. Now no mood of exhilaration led to the outburst; rather the contrary, and much more dangerous. Was it a month of futile attempts to connect with a mere high-school senior? Was it his flouting of his father's order to see no more of Peter Weld by repeated visits to the bungalow which should have been quite flattering to the simple soul of the old sage, if the old sage had only been so simple? Or was it the growing chasm between his own line of thinking and that of his father, a chasm widened by the repeated two-hour conferences always at four in the afternoon with the mild but stalwart white-haired rebel? Whatever the cause, the certainty emerges that Richard fell, fell hard; and the private dining-room at the Seminole Club, engaged by himself and five other young bloods, saw a feast bacchanalian in all respects except that it remained strictly masculine.

Three o'clock in the morning found the songs all sung that the combined memories of six young men could furnish who had gone to six different colleges and had all attended the same musical shows and revues. Melancholy conversation had succeeded the hilarity of an earlier hour, and six

unhappy love affairs, each one beautiful and tearful to the narrator, had been confided to walls which through the years had heard so much of similar tenor. Confided to the walls, literally, because the ears of the walls alone paid heed to the narratives, done either solo, in duet, or sextette. Richard next day need have no fears lest he had dishonored the name of Penelope Weld by utterance in such atmosphere. He had been literally incapable of doing such a thing. All five of his friends, after the event, assured him and each other that no lady's name had been articulate on that solemn occasion.

Four o'clock of that warm Saturday morning, first day of November, had found Richard, the least overcome, perhaps, of the roisterers, delivering carefully and punctiliously a husband of six months' standing into the hands of a laughing bride. Understanding girl that! Four-ten found Richard still bowing hat in hand to a closed door, clouds slowly rolling away from about his thinking and remembering machinery. Four-fifteen found him stumbling into the waiting yellow-cab, and enunciating with a fair intelligibility the address of Penelope Weld, like a murderer irresistibly drawn to the scene of his crime — except that he said Elm Street, instead of Oak Street, perfectly natural error for one with all his wits about him, especially one who had spent four years beneath the elms of New Haven; but Richard possessed as yet only one-half or possibly three-quarters of his wits. The three miles of drive in the crisp morning air from the apartment house neighborhood to the cottage-and-garden neighborhood should have sobered Richard. Indeed it did, in spots; but one spot, the spot of location, still remained black with a nebulous cloud.

He paid off his driver before he turned to walk into the gate and found path and shubbery unfamiliar. Too late he

retreated; his cab had gone. Pondering deeply, he sought the reason for this exile to strange territory, walked to the street corner to look up the signs, perfectly readable in the light of a late and, like himself, very full, moon, and not at all readable by the imperfect street illumination. Nearly five o'clock before he caught dim apprehension of the mistake he had made. Then unfortunately, or fortunately, instead of following the sidewalks one block over, he undertook to remedy his error and retrieve lost time by cutting across a vacant wooded lot which ought to lead him to the rear elevation of the Weld bungalow. All he wished to do, anyway, was to guess at her window, stretch himself on the cold sod beneath it, weep for an hour, and arise to pursue his lonely way. Some such idea, if any, guided him.

He got through the greater part of the wooded lot in a diagonal course without mishap. He came to what he believed to be the rear view of her dwelling. He paused in a thicket of small trees, shrubs, and the remnant of a rural mock-orange hedge when he saw a spirit. Certainly it is a spirit! An angel! A wood nymph! A fairy! There is no such thing. God, how drunk I am! No, a low humming sound comes from the spirit, as with outstretched and weaving hands it comes dancing over the turf of Peter Weld's back garden! A nude girl? Damn near it. Something like a light mist round her, that's all, diaphanous mist, silvered by the moonlight of Indian summer. Barefoot, yes, sir! Can almost see her toes. Figure against the gossamer moonlight, almost as clear as day, yet mysterious, glamorous. Afraid to stir, Richard begged Bacchus, or that god who might be the bitterest foe of Bacchus, to release his faculties, untangle his brain and eyes, so that he might see this apparition clear, fathom this mystery. Slowly the prayer received answer as Richard put all the concentration he could sum-

mon into his well-above-average mind. The morning air helped. By five o'clock straight up, he knew he was fairly sober and this fairy sprite was real.

Yes, very real, very much flesh and blood, but floating like a wraith, she moved in slow dance-steps to hummed or imaginary music, or stood with hands reached up, cupped or outspread, to catch the stars or the dew or perhaps to shake them from her fingers. Now she stood still, tip-toed, took deep breaths, threw head far back and looked into the night sky, adoration on lovely features. He at last recognized Penelope, gasped and covered his eyes. Is she mad? Or am I still drunk? A half-hour he stood as if growing in that thicket. Maybe he was. At last the silver moonlight began to give way to the gray light of dawn. No mistake. It is Penny. What does she mean by this eerie nocturnal conduct? He could see now that she wore something more than he had supposed, but little more. That robe which seemed so thin with the moon shining through now fell about her as she stood still with more protection than he had surmised. He knew, furthermore, that now he was cold-sober, and that his resolution grew within him not to run away, but to advance and speak to her though she blast him.



He did so. To his astonishment he violated her school-girlish instructions about her name and blurted, 'Penelope!'

'Who are you?' came the calm reply.

'What are you doing? Morning set-up?'

'No. All night bath of beauty on Hallowe'en. Who are you?'

'Dick Bronze.'

'Oh!' in a gasp. 'I thought you were Ned — somebody

else.' She clutched her chiffon negligee closer round her and seized from the ground Peter Weld's old woolen dressing gown. ' You'd better go away.' But her tone said just the opposite, ' You'd better come closer.'

' I'm going to, pretty soon. But first I'm going to find out if you are a manic depressive, or if — if you're drunk like me.'

' Are you drunk? How romantic! '

' I was drunk. I'm not now. I'm as sober as the soldiers' monument. What in hell's got into you? '

' Nothing. Haven't had a single drink, but I've been drunk all night. With beauty and romance.'

' Hell you say! Are you by any chance — ah — in love? '

' Yes. Have been ever since I can remember with first one and then another, but most of all in love with beauty the sky and the stars, the flowers and the speckled light through the trees.'

' The flowers are all dead. They were frostbitten last month.'

' Oh, I know, now. But not in all the summer nights I've spent out here when Dad and Chris were asleep and thought I was. I decided I'd repeat tonight, for old time's sake. Yes, ever since I was twelve.'

' God'l'mighty! Don't you get sleepy? '

' No.'

' Don't you lie down and sleep? '

' No. Lie down sometimes, look up at the sky. But no sleep. Oh, when you breathe deep, like this, don't you feel tall as the sky? '

' Not me! No.'

' I do. Sometimes, when I breathe so deep, I feel like touching the tops of the trees, vaulting over, flying.'

' If you dreamed of flying — 'twould mean something

but just thinking about it. Say, you're sort of goofy, aren't you?'

'No. Very practical young woman. But romantic. Highly. You've come like a — like a cavalier, unexpected!'

'I say, are you in love right now?'

'Yes.'

'May I ask who is the fortunate man?'

'Yes, a coal-miner, and an iron puddler.'

'A — what?'

'Yes. Coal-digger. With black fingernails. Needs a manicure. If I ever catch him, I'll do him a manicure.'

'Catch him? Can't you do that, easily enough?'

'No. Not easily. You see he's married.'

'Married!' Richard exhaled much breath. 'Now I know you're cracked; or else kidding me. Look here, little school girl with the grand manner, you just keep on pulling my leg and I'll do you a — a personal violence!'

'That would be a real touch of romance. I distinctly encourage it.' Yet somehow the bearing of this school girl belied her words. She looked watchful and tip-toed. Richard did not fancy a foot race with her over the turf now lit almost with daylight. Often her words meant something quite different from what the unsuspecting and not mentally alert might suppose. How about this word married? Well, how about it?

'Yes, married. I mean married. To a Communist girl with bushy, sandy hair, a dirty sandy. And she's going to be fat and square and round.'

'Communist! Now I know you're kidding me.'

'No, for my romantic coal-miner is nearly a Communist. Not quite, but nearly. He'll never make the grade. That's why—'

'Why what?'

‘ Why I haven’t given him up.’

‘ You’d give him up if he became a Communist?’

‘ He’ll never become a Communist.’

‘ But suppose he did?’

‘ Don’t become a child, supposing things!’

‘ Who’s a child? Dancing all night in the moonlight!’

‘ You think that’s childish? Shows how little you’re a child of the imagination and the beauty-bath!’

‘ That what you call it?’

‘ Never called it anything till you had to come along and break into it and make it a wordy thing.’

‘ Just the same you think it’s romantic to have a cavalier break in, a mysterious knight.’

‘ You do understand a little, don’t you? It’s because you’re a drunken cavalier. You’d never understand, if sober.’

‘ Oh yes, I would — or I could get drunk like you on moonlight and wet grass, in fact I’m getting drunk again, this time not on liquor. Come on let’s dance together. I’ll show you I understand.’

He stepped forward, took her hand, and they swayed toward the woods at arms’ length from each other, slowly and with the stateliness of a minuet. She dropped her father’s old robe, and merely held her negligee about her with the other hand.

‘ You can walk a straight line, can’t you, with me holding you?’ she said, after they had moved back and forth over the grass-plot several times.

‘ Yes. Forever! Come here!’

He drew her toward him with sudden force, put his arms about her, and kissed her — just her cheek. She turned away her mouth. Then she froze, like a statue of white iron, moved slowly away from him and looked at him with big eyes, steely and frosty.

‘ You would, wouldn’t you! When I trusted you! ’

‘ Forgive me, Penny! When can I see you, and talk this all out. I’ve tried hard to see you. When? ’

‘ Never.’ Just that one word.

‘ Why not, Penny, dear? ’

‘ Because we can never be anything to each other. We don’t belong in the same social stratum.’

‘ I don’t mind that. Damn it, I’ll smash the stratum. I’ll take you up into my stratum.’

‘ No. I didn’t mean that. I mean I can’t descend into yours, nor you ascend, I’m afraid, into mine.’

‘ Ascend! ’ Too astonished to laugh, he asked, ‘ What do you mean? ’

‘ Exactly that. You think you’re an aristocrat, don’t you? Well, you’re not. There’s only one aristocracy in this country or this world, an aristocracy of brains and character— brains, culture, and character. Money can’t buy its way into that aristocracy. You have nothing but money! ’

‘ I have, too. I have brains. Your father, whom you’re quoting, of course—I heard him say all that the other day— told me I was above the average.’

‘ Yes. I heard him say that.’

‘ You did? Where were you? ’

‘ Eavesdropping.’

‘ You little mouse! You dear little mouse.’

‘ Being above the average doesn’t put you into the aristocracy, only into the upper middle-class. And you haven’t culture.’

‘ Well by heck I’ll get it. I’ll make her hum.’

‘ And you’re without character, or you wouldn’t come spying on a girl like a peeping Tom, and kissing her by force. Might as well kiss a football dummy. Did you enjoy the leathery feeling? ’

‘I did. It was heavenly!’

‘Well, I can’t stay arguing with — a member of the petty bourgeoisie. And really you can’t attain aristocracy. You have to be born to it, born to the purple. Good night. Or good morning!’

She gathered again the old dressing gown round her shoulders without actually putting it on, and moved slowly away toward her house.

‘But Penny. You haven’t told me when I can see you again. When?’

‘Yes, I have. I’ve told you, never. And—I—mean—it! Good morning.’



William Bronze spent more of his time at his *Sentinel* office than at any of his other offices. He liked to drop in at the steel works, and then drive over to the *Semiramis Oil Company* for a quarter of an hour, then to the *Seminole National Bank* to show up at the directors’ meeting, then to the *Roxanna Coal Company*, and so on; but he always returned to the *Sentinel* well before noon, when the most important news pages began to take final shape. You might or you might not catch him at any of the other offices — no regular routine — and, if you did, you might or you might not catch his ear; but if you really had to see him, your best chance lay at the *Sentinel* between eleven and twelve o’clock.

He loved to feel himself like a spider at the center of a web, the web of telegraph and telephone wires which rayed out in every direction into the remotest corners of city, state, and nation, even of the world. He loved to say that he knew everything that went on in *Seminole* even before it happened; that, in fact, he made most of it happen. He felt

that he sat at the nerve center and pulled wires which were nothing less than nerves and made people dance to them. He, the master showman.

Not that anything out in the world compared in importance with what occurred in Seminole, oh, no! A dog-fight in Seminole held more news value than a war in China. What did he care about the Balkans, care or know? What figure did the Allied debts and the various plans for payment of reparations amount to? He cared nothing for them except to collect them to the last pound, or franc, or lira. Principal and interest. Every ounce, every drop. We won the war for those fellows, didn't we? Now let them pay up. Not our war, anyway. He knew he had made millions in the war; all his dividends from all his mills and mines and wells, not to mention the revenues from the *Sentinel*, had, in a golden stream, come pouring in. Nevertheless, he would have profited just as much, maybe more, if we had never got into the dad-blamed fracas. We ought to stay at home in future, let the other fellows fight if they must, and we furnish the materials and reap the profits. That was the extent of his foreign policy. Mind our own business. Stick to business. Let the rest of the world alone.

Therefore the *Sentinel* printed very little foreign news, and that little always played down, over on the thirteenth page or the twenty-second. Divorces in Seminole took the front page, and bank clearings, and a new dog-crate factory come to town, and a new boulevard opened up, and a fifteen-dollar fire in a curio-shop. The Dawes plan? What did anybody care about the Dawes plan? The Locarno pact? To hell with it. What concern did it hold for the telephone girls, the waitresses, and the bridge-hounds? That's my public. What do I care about the four hundred? I care only for the four hundred thousand. Women read the ads;

women spend the money; this paper must appeal to the women, all kinds of women. Then it will reach the men.

If, therefore, Richard wished to talk to his father on business and in business hours, he knew where and when to find him. He found him on Christmas eve. Bill Bronze was sitting at his office table when Dick came in, a line of men queued along the side of the big city room waiting turns to pass in, forlorn looking men, down-at-the-heel men, jobless men.

‘Sit down, my boy,’ said Bill Bronze. ‘I have to attend to this little matter.’

He drew from his breast pocket two thick packages of brand-new one-dollar bills; must have been a hundred in each package. As each man came up, Bill Bronze reached across his table and shook hands and, with a soft voice carrying a courtesy nothing less than royal, addressed each one:

‘Here, my son, is a little Christmas token, carrying my good will. May next year be brighter for you than the last.’

‘To you, sir, goes my best wish for a happy Christmas for you and yours, and a happy and prosperous new year.’

‘My boy, I’m sorry you’ve had a tough time the past year. Here’s wishing you better luck in the year to come. No. Don’t thank me. Goodbye.’

Dick watched his father narrowly. What did he expect to get out of this? Undoubtedly he was not throwing this money away for nothing. Bill Bronze never did anything for nothing, especially let go of a dollar. Any revolt impending? Dick knew of none. His father explained to Richard in the gap between the comings of the men, that these were men who habitually sat on benches in the city room waiting to read the want ads or to be sent out for jobs

for which hurried demands sometimes came in over the telephones. None of them had done much work for a long time; they had little chance of a cheerful Christmas; these two one-dollar bills which each one got would make all the difference in their homes. Bill Bronze felt good, but let little of inward glow appear upon his immobile countenance. Some of these men would mouth much about his great heart and good qualities; some would curse him behind his back for a czar and a charity-monger, a cheap skate and a revolution-breeder. What difference anyway did the attitude of such riff-raff make to Bill Bronze? Richard could not read the riddle of this strange investment. Investment of some kind he well knew.

Richard had to wait, even when the line had all filed by, until a woman from 'back east' had come in to thank his father for the coal, the best on the market, which she bought at half-price through the Sentinel. She'd brought her son out here dying of tuberculosis; he was much better, thank you, Mr. Bronze, you're *so good*, to be interested in strangers, and my dear boy—tears—we have a little cottage, so cheerful, and coal would have been almost prohibitive but for you; and, Mr. Bronze, I know it was two tons, though I paid only for one. You're just too good, dear Mr. Bronze. I suppose you're overwhelmed with gratitude? No? Where are the other nine? Well, goodbye, I know you're busy. Yes, my dear lady, thoughtful of you to come, so thoughtful. That will do. Don't cry any more. I hope the boy recovers rapidly. No, no more time today. (Damn it, I shouldn't have mentioned the boy again. Might have known it would uncork her again.) Goodbye, Mrs.—ah—Mrs.—goodbye.

Richard narrowly studied his father. Couldn't fathom him. Such things did not seem to coalesce with those views about a world of wolves, and get your wolf before he gets

you. Was his father two men? What do they call it, dual personality, split personality? Or was he just one, and that one cold and hard as his steel bars and plates, selfish beyond all other human selfishness, but an actor, skilful and adroit? What was this strange, brilliant, fascinating creature, his father? Dick had fallen to studying him only the last six months or so, since Dick had come home from college and gone to work in the steel-mills. Too short a time to master so intricate a course of study.

‘Dad, I don’t like the way we got that tank contract from the United.’ Dick opened up suddenly, when at last they secured privacy.

‘No? What’s the matter?’

‘Well, Ferguson had it sewed up, until something happened.’

‘Do you think he’ll bring suit? Let him. I’m ready for him.’

‘No, not that. But the ethics of the thing—’

‘Ethics? Ah, that’s what’s troubling you? Well, don’t let it, my boy, don’t let it. I’m responsible. I stand between you and any—ah—results.’

‘But, we’ll shove him out of business, at this rate. This is the third time.’

‘Competition, I know, is fierce, and blood-thirsty and cut-throat. It’s a shame we have to conduct business in this way; but business is business. You see I have something on the United. Something—ah—connected with the internal revenue department. They couldn’t quite give this contract to Ferguson and ignore me—us.’

‘But Ferguson under-bid—’

‘Yes, damn him. He’d have lost money on the deal. I’ve saved him a loss, if he only knew it. He’d better play with us or—’

‘Or you’ll break him, that it?’

‘Sure I’ll break him.’ Bill Bronze spoke in sweet quiet tones. ‘Don’t you see the handwriting? He’ll sell out to us within six months.’

‘At a good price?’

‘Well, at my — our price. And a rock-ribbed contract not to open up again. He couldn’t anyhow.’

‘Doesn’t the Sherman law apply to things of this kind?’

‘Not for us, my boy. Sit still in the boat, son. Don’t be uneasy. I’ll not rock it. It’s riding smooth and easy. Everything’s lovely.’

‘Well, I’m out of harmony. That’s what I was afraid of last fall, you remember —’

‘After you’d been talking to that Peter Weld? I told you to leave him alone. Have you been seeing him any more?’

‘Yes.’ A little defiance. Bill Bronze flushed, and made evident effort at control. Dick, who had stood across the table on the spot of rug lately occupied by the jobless, now sat down as if knocked down by the pent-up electricity behind his father’s suavity.

‘Well, you’re free and twenty-one. I cannot or will not order you; but I counsel you, my dear boy, to leave that Peter Weld out of your list of acquaintances. He’s a dangerous man. He’s dangerous to your own peace of mind.’

‘Yes. He’s a sort of conscience to me.’

‘Conscience can be misguided.’

‘I think he does not misguide.’

‘You’d better leave him alone. Now, how about your Christmas shopping? Have you bought everything for your mother and Jane?’

‘Yes, after a fashion. I—I’m thinking of going away tonight.’

‘Away? Where? You’ll not be home Christmas day? Oh, son, you’ve never missed Christmas at home, since you were born!’

‘Yes, I missed one Christmas. The Glee Club didn’t come here my junior year, and I had to go with the Club. It did last year.’

‘That’s so. I’d forgot. That was a—well, we missed you, boy. Don’t—don’t—do it again. There’s no compulsion this time. Where do you want to go?’

‘Bib Kane wants me to come out to Prairie des Cygnes to shoot quail.’

‘Couldn’t you go some other day besides Christmas?’

‘The bird season is over with December. When could I go? I don’t get many holidays, remember that.’ A slight tone of reproach came into Richard’s words. After all, though in his twenty-third year, he still remained essentially boyish.

‘I know; but remember, too, that you’re to be head of the works, and have to set an example, and maintain discipline.’

Something of the toughness of fiber that belonged to his father began to appear in the tense jaws and neck muscles of the boy, and in the mounting color; but something also of the father’s control kept his words and tones moderate and soft. After a momentary silence Richard ended the debate:

‘I’ll be there at breakfast, and at the Christmas tree. I’ll leave about ten. That will be time enough for me to reach the shooting grounds by noon. I’ll wire Bib.’

From this ground of quiet compromise, nothing could move him, neither his father, nor, later on, his mother. Jane did not join the opposition, but stood with Richard.

Dick took a blind chance when he pulled up his roadster in a bank of snow before the gate at the little house of the Welds. He came bearing gifts, certain coveted new volumes for Peter, and a box for Penelope, six feet long with the stems of the tall roses sticking out at the end even of such a masterpiece of elongation. His shot-gun and shells, his sweater and shooting-jacket lay in the rumble. He wore his wool-lined, khaki shooting-pants and high-laced boots, with an ordinary gray business coat and shell-vest. If the pair in the cottage treated him with suspicion, like a Greek bearing gifts, he would depart for Prairie des Cygnes. If they felt the absence of Chris—and he knew they would—possibly they might tolerate his presence as a sort of substitute, for as much as an hour on Christmas day. He would act the part of opportunist.

Penelope greeted him at the door, the first sight he had had of her since that November morning when he saw her dancing on the grass. Not the first she had had of him; but she had always managed to 'see him first.'

'Well!'—an ejaculation of evident astonishment and much too evident disapproval, to warm the cockles of my heart, thought Dick. By the way, what are cockles? I must look this up in the big unabridged in Peter Weld's den, if I get into the house this day. Can this girl withstand American beauties? Looks as if she ate them for breakfast every morning and has just had enough, thank you. Damn her eyes, yes, blue, sea-blue, sky-blue.

'Merry Christmas! I haven't seen you since—ah—since Chiffon Morning. Don't I deserve a sight of you for Christmas cheer? Anyway, may I pipe your Dad?'

'Will you come in?'

‘Will I? Watch me!’

‘Father, a gentleman to see you.’

‘A *petit bourgeois*, please tell him,’ he spoke low enough for her ear only. ‘And these posies are pining to get out of jail. Do you mind releasing them and putting them in a tumbler or a vase?’

‘The umbrella stand, which used to be a fourteen inch shell, or was it fourteen centimeters or kilometers, or something. Peter will like these roses. Sweet of you.’

‘He likes everything of yours, doesn’t he?’

‘Oh, for me? You don’t really—well, it is sweet of you, anyway.’ No, she can’t resist ’em, by heck. I’m well above the average in knowledge of feminine psychology, anyhow. I’ve blasted the door open, if it has taken a fourteen kilometer shell. Aloud he said:

‘Merry Christmas, sir. I’ve got a half-dozen review copies — came to the Sentinel you know —’ he lied glibly, for he had paid two and a half to five dollars a volume for them. ‘You may not be interested — I just took a chance, sir. Give ’em to the public library, if you don’t care for ’em. They’d send for ’em.’

‘Ah, Marshall & Lyon, Our Economic Organization; and — ah — Hecht, Real Wealth of Nations; Lewis, Scientific Economics; and Keynes! Great stuff, my boy! I’ve got in bids at all the libraries in town for these very books. I’ve been waiting weeks. You — you have a good judgment in — m — m — m this man Keynes, he’s keen! Beg — m — pardon. Now here, first shot out of the box he says, m — m — listen to this —’ Peter looked up. No presence in the library. Dick had bolted to the kitchen, to help fill the big brass shell with water and, he grinned as he thought, to bolt that kitchen door against the exit of the light cavalry — no, they didn’t have cavalry any more — the French tank — no, that

wouldn't do, too lumbering — the pursuit plane, no, I'm the pursuit plane — damn it, the — whatever she is, at last I've got a look in. The mocker! That's what I called her last summer.

‘Here, I've got my hunting knife, I'll whack those stems off a foot or so — ’

‘You vandal! ’

‘Well, how'll we ever get 'em through that door? ’

‘Tilt 'em. ’

‘That would spill all the water. ’

‘What of it? There'll be enough left for them to drink, and I'll mop up the spilled. ’ Then he added, ‘Or leave 'em here in the kitchen. ’

‘Roses in the kitchen? ’

‘You're in here, aren't you? You're — ’

‘No! ’

‘Oh, have a heart. Leave 'em here a while and let's look at 'em together. ’

‘No, father — ’

‘He's deep in Keynes. He's keen on Keynes. He thinks Keynes keen. He is absorbed, lost to the world. He nearly aid I was well above average in judgment of books, too. He eally thinks a lot of me, did you know it? ’

‘A bourgeois — and bigoted! ’

‘No, you are not using that word properly. You mean onceited; but bigoted is only middle west provincial in that ense. Bigoted means opinionated, fanatical in opinion. ’

‘Bigoted, and conceited, and opinionated, and fanatical, I meant all of them. ’

‘Isn't your vocabulary any bigger than that? Must I supply all your words for you? All but one, and that one incorrectly used? What about all that aristocracy of culture? Now listen to me heap some epithets upon you — you blessed,

bloomin', scintillant, saccharine school-girl, you dancing dear, you precocious, luscious Penelope —'

'Hush, or I'll —'

'What will you do?'

'I don't know, except order you out of this house.'

'I can't go till after dinner. Do you have it at noon as usual or evening for Christmas? I was going bird-shooting, until you led me into this kitchen. Now I see the preparations; those are mince-pies, aren't they? Who in the world's to eat them?'

'Talk about preposterous —'

'Well, who's coming?'

'No one, until eight o'clock.'

'Who then?'

'Some friends.'

'What's his name?'

'Ned — well, of all the —'

'Yes, of all the asinine names! I'll sit him out.'

'You'll do nothing of the kind. In a little while, after you've talked a bit to Peter, you'll go — bird-shooting.'

'I'll shoot no birds today, except it be a mocker. I love mockers.'

'How many?'

'All of them rolled into one. And you're it. I love you, Penny. And I'm going to have you. Oh, marry you. I give due and legal notice, and you're going to say yes, when you get tired saying no. Now come on, little mocker, nightingale — only we don't have 'em in this country — dancer in the moonlight. I've said what I came into this culinary citadel to say. I'll help you tilt 'em and carry them in to Peter Weld. Here we come, Mr. Weld!'

He certainly ran things to suit himself, this impudent — chip of the old block. Bill Bronze always carried things

with a high hand, she'd heard that. And a showman, like his Dad.

‘Oh, how glorious, Penny! Where did they come from? Never anything like that in this house before! Exquisite, stately, tall and so graceful!’

‘Mr. Bronze brought them.’

‘My name’s Dick.’

‘Mr. Richard Bronze brought them.’

‘And I’m going to stay a while, Mr. Weld. Miss Weld — ah — has been good enough to invite me to dinner. Oh, I’ll not bother you all the time from now till dinner, whenever that is. I know you’re — ah — eager to get at those books —’

‘Yes, but never too eager to talk — to you, Richard. Delighted. I’m sure I’m flattered by your visits to me.’

‘Well, sir, this once, Christmas day, you know, I’ll not impose.’

‘Oh, very well. As you wish. We’re having one o’clock dinner today. You mean you’ll come back? I suppose you do have a great many calls to make —’

‘No sir, I didn’t mean exactly that. You see, sir, Miss Weld has been good enough to ask me to help get the dinner and — I just thought I would.’

Peter now looked with level eyes first at the young man, then at Penelope, and said: ‘Ah! I see!’ He continued to look at Penny, as if to catch from her any unspoken message. Penny looked at the floor, at the flowers, out the window at the snow, everywhere but into her father’s eyes. Then Peter Weld, without further word, re-entered the library from the dining room, took up his book, seated himself in a soft leather arm-chair and thumbed the pages, but no longer read. He looked at the door, and pondered the foolishness of families mixing up as they do in this world, criss-

crossing and trying to intermarry. Propinquity; no doubt marriages are made in localities, not in heaven.

Richard sat on a tall stool in the kitchen while Penny, in apron and rolled up sleeves, just as in all old days, went on with the tasks of the Christmas dinner. Long slender arms, small wrists, firm, well-covered elbows, not dimpled but gracefully turned. Give her two years, she'll be a stunning woman. Dainty, strong, both excellent things in woman. She can batte. We'll need to, unless I'm mistaken. I see wars coming for us, both of us, and together. Richard said no more aloud about love, dropped the tone of banter, except now and then, talked freely of himself, his work, his outlook, his views, unconventional for a capitalist, and, although she answered little and only in dignified monosyllables, or an occasional question, he did not feel that he bored her. In fact, he knew right well he did not. When now and then he fell silent for a while, he could feel no boredom or embarrassment on either side. Once or twice he offered his help, but she only shooed him away or laughed softly at his bunglesomeness. Now and then he walked to a window and looked out, but for the most part watched only her.

They mentioned Chris at dinner. Inevitable. Although he had missed other Christmas dinners—he hadn't the money to come home from Harvard, and then there was the war—nevertheless the poignancy of his absence this particular year had struck deeper into the hearts of his father and sister than ever before. Knowing as Richard now did the real cause for the son's absence, he felt the first intense uneasiness, embarrassment, humiliation, at the mention of Christopher's name. Peter and Penelope shared his dis-ease. At last Dick grasped the nettle and blurted:

‘Different for a woman in such matters than for a man!’

Neither Penelope nor her father answered, and Dick lumbered along without his accustomed adroitness and happiness of phrase and manner.

‘Now a woman is more or less still a dependent, in mind if not otherwise, despite the nineteenth amendment. She’s so used to obeying somebody. She can’t take the bit in her teeth, and all that, you know. A man can —’

‘I’m sure I don’t know in the least what you’re talking about.’ Penny at last took pity. ‘Now any woman has the vote, citizenship, the right and the opportunity to work, take care of herself, shape her life —’

‘Yes, I know, but she’s more a creature of conventions than a man, she’s sewed up with a system, she’s sensitive to the opinions — that is, most women are. You’re different — ah — Penny. Now you have the nerve —’

At the mention of his daughter’s name with such familiarity, Peter Weld glanced up from his plate, scanned her face a moment, and then looked, mildly interrogative, at Richard. That young man seemed oblivious that he had said anything unusual. He was prepared, should Peter make any comment, to come out then and there and declare his desperate intentions; but Peter spared him the ordeal. Soon the conversation drifted into the favorite lines of the white-haired host: the war debts, the tariff, the Soviet five-year plan, and the generally discouraging economic state of the world.



‘I can help clear away and do the dishes, anyway,’ said Richard, when the three had spent an after-dinner hour, somewhat somnolent under the weight of mince pie.

‘No, no. I’ll not do them till — till later.’

‘Till I’m gone away? But I’m not going.’

‘Then you and father take the state of the world into the library, and I’ll attend to this little corner of the earth’s surface.’

‘Not unaided, with a perfectly able-bodied and not altogether unskilled workman about. I don’t belong to the dishwashers’ union, but I’m thinking of starting one.’

‘Well, I’ll not join it. I’m non-union.’

‘For the time being, only. You’re going to be patrolled until you join my union.’

Peter Weld had taken his pipe into the library and his itching fingers to the pages of Keynes. He had cast one apprehensive glance toward the little hall between him and the dining-room, had listened one apprehensive moment to the laughter of the two, mingling with the clink of dishes, then sighing he had turned his eyes and his mind to the discussions of Keynes. Penny could take care of herself; her eyes were open.

Richard tried hard at patience, circumspection, restraint. He never touched Penny, except now and again in the discharge of duty with the tea-towel, and with quite evident inadvertence, or what he believed to be quite evident, when his knuckles brushed her forearm. Nobody can ever know the iron will he exerted at such moments. Nobody will ever know whether anything like the same nerve shock went through Penelope Weld. Those dishes seemed unconscionably slow getting done; and an interminable patter of talk still emanated from Richard, and only guarded participation came from Penny.

This man, another grown man, six years older than herself, almost as old as Chris and Happy Powers, coming into her life, with an intimacy she had never known with any but her brother, an enforced intimacy, to be sure, like that

first kiss, so very long ago, almost two months — she feared it, enjoyed it, did her loyal best to fight against it. Whenever she thought of Chris, and what the Bronzes had done to him, she loathed this self-assured, easy-going, assertive and possessive man, and felt the need of taking a broom or a mop to him and driving him off the place. Whenever he made some sudden laughing, wordy pass at her, however, she could not restrain the impulse to parry and thrust. He really was great fun if only he were not a Bronze. She would come back at him; they would laugh spontaneously; then she would bring herself up with a round turn and try to freeze. He felt every moment, every hour, more sure that he made progress.

Early winter twilight came and the pair still puttered in the dining-room and kitchen. Dick tried vainly to entice Penny out into the roadster, now snugly curtained, for an hour's air. She replied each time in the negative. Too cold; she couldn't leave her father alone on Christmas; she had too much to do; and she even suggested quite too frequently for Dick's unalloyed comfort that he'd better go out in his roadster alone. He only laughed and refused with constantly diminishing confidence.

At last the storm broke. He had been arguing to her that one could be sincere though rich, could desire the good of the masses even though a part of the System, could devote his life to social reformation and reconstruction, even if he had to work from the top down. He said:

‘Now you could work with me, and we could come at it from two angles. I from the capitalist point of view and you from —’

‘The proletariat?’

‘I didn't say that. No, the scientific.’

‘That’s only your second thought. You really meant the other.’

‘I swear I didn’t. You’re over-sensitive like all those who aren’t — ah — who aren’t — ’

‘Aren’t what? Out with it! ’ Penny’s eyes began to blaze and freeze at one and the same time. Richard had begun to fear those eyes.

‘Well, who aren’t born rich,’ doggedly, ‘there’s a streak of — ah — envy, you know, in all of us. I envy your father his learning and his clear mind.’

‘And I envy you your wealth, the Bronze wealth, built up by blackmail, fraud, and chicanery? That it? You think I’d envy you that doubtful heritage? Every rag on your body bought at the expense of somebody’s fear and sweat? Your swell car the product of somebody’s over-hours or somebody’s threatened shame and exposure?’

‘Penny, Penny, you’re too — you’re not looking at things right. I know all that you know, and admit that — that my Dad has not been too scrupulous — ’

‘I should think not! And if you were a real man, you couldn’t sleep quiet in his palace at night, you’d choke on his food, you’d leave his car standing in the street and walk before you’d ride in it. You’d kick over the whole — the whole card-house and strike out to — to — ’

‘To do what? Show me! ’

‘I don’t know, but I’d do something! ’

‘Yes, that’s what it always comes to. Everybody who isn’t in my place would do something. They don’t know what.’

‘It’s up to you to find out! ’

‘I’m going to. When my time comes. All I can do now is to study and prepare for that time. It would do no good just to throw up my chance, start out tramping, organizing Communist groups, or making windy speeches.’

‘ Better than silently accepting all you’re taking of blood money, hush money, sweat money, and — and — presuming upon the basis of it to — to wreck people’s lives.’

‘ Whose life am I wrecking?’

‘ Well, Chris’s, if you want me to be honest and unashamed. You and yours have exiled my brother, broken his life. He’s — he’s going to China!’

‘ China? What do you mean?’

‘ He’s asked his paper to attach him to its office in Shanghai, and he’s going in January. Can’t even come home to say goodbye.’

‘ He’d do better to sail from Frisco or Seattle.’

‘ They’re sending him the other way, through the Mediterranean.’

‘ Why didn’t you tell me before? I’m so sorry. But what could I have done? How am I responsible?’

‘ You are responsible, you and your father, and all the Bronzes.’

‘ Don’t be unreasonable, Penny. I told Jane she ought to bust loose and go to him.’

‘ I don’t care if I am unreasonable, and if you call me unreasonable. Call me all the names you please. I’ll consider where it all comes from, you Bronzes. You’d work from the top, would you? The top of a heap of carrion and garbage.’ Penny now walked from dining-room to kitchen, and from kitchen to dining-room, while the dismayed Richard, trying to keep up with her and placate her walked part way at her shoulder. Here was a side of her nature he had not seen, her fury, her unreason, her tantrums, her capability of violence. She wadded a handkerchief and held it clenched in her right palm. Her left hand doubled up as tightly as the other, into a mannish fist. The muscles of her bare arms rippled visibly as she swung them in her stride. Hips

and thighs, too, supple and strong, swayed in a sort of lithe undulation. She had worked herself up into a fury like a wild animal, her tension all the greater from the necessity of keeping her voice down, not to disturb Peter Weld.

Richard understood now the fire that all day had smoldered underneath her enforced civility, understood the reason of her monosyllabic conversation. All this time, he felt now, he had misunderstood her mood, taken too much for granted, mistaken endurance of him and his presence on this holiday for a gradual entrance into her good graces. He wished he were well out of it. How could he gracefully take his leave? He made the mistake, natural to all of us, of one more attempt at self-justification:

‘But, Penny, honestly, I had nothing to do with all this. I was away at college. Dad did it. And Jane told me — ’

‘Yes, lay it on your Dad. You’re a Bronze, aren’t you? Jane couldn’t help it. The woman always gets it in the neck. You Bronze men! At the top, are you! Well, we’ll see some day, we’ll see! ’

‘I’ll help any way I can to straighten things out. I swear I will. When the time comes.’

‘When the time comes! Yes, wait till the millennium comes. You, you haven’t the courage and — and the brains of a mouse. You come here to this house on a Christmas day and — and thrust yourself in. You buy your way in with books and flowers — flowers born out of muck and filth, with no place to rest but in a shell! ’

‘Oh, Penny! ’

‘Yes, you do! Don’t stop me. You begin with impudence, and all day long you continue with condescension, putting on airs, talking down to a child and an old man, patronizing, a man you — can’t tie his shoes — aren’t worthy. He

oughtn't — wipe his feet — oh, I wish you'd go away and never come back any more. Go away, I tell you, go —'

'But, Penny! I don't want to go while you're feeling —'

'I'll always feel this way. Now go. Get your hat! Go — I hate you, hate you, hate you!'

Richard silently went, pale with shame, anger, despair, fought with his car, which had stood nearly all day in the cold, fought for a quarter of an hour to get it started. He did not even tell Peter Weld goodbye, but growled to Penny, 'Thank him for me.' When at last his engine started, he did not look back at the house. If he had done so, and if the walls had been transparent, he would have seen a subdued Fury, arms on the dining-table, face buried in them, shoulders heaving in sobs, and the little handkerchief utterly inadequate to fulfill its proper function.



The club — the refuge of unhappy men — found Richard that Christmas night in a retired corner. The waiter — another adjunct of the unhappy — came with set-ups. Richard, following the precedent of so many of the unhappily helpless, began the process of rendering himself as oblivious as possible to his pain. It was the University Club he chose for fear at the Seminole Club he might run into his father. Instead, one of his father's reporters ran into him. Only a year out of college, the reporter stood eligible to membership, and while on the waiting list enjoyed the privileges.

'Hello, Reyburn.' Dick tried to be short and unsociable, but Reyburn — also one of the unhappy — pulled out a flask and incontinently sat down at the same smoking table.

'Hello, Richard. What the hell are you doing here, on Christmas. I thought this was the place for the lonesome.'

'No, the convivial, it seems.' Dick did his best to growl

and be forbidding, but a sharper eye than Reyburn's could not see it.

'I'm both, if you mean me. I'm up against it more ways than one. Have come to a big crisis in my life, and I don't mind telling you your father's the cause of it. You know how I think the world and all of him. He's done more for me than any man alive.'

'Didn't know it.' Dick's tone actually grew ungracious, but Reyburn, now well launched, paid no heed. He tore along:

'Yes, sir. I'll tell you the whole story. When I was a little kid, only ten, I happened to be travelling alone out this way, going to the Rockies. My Dad told me—we lived up-state in New York—that he had a friend in Seminole, old hunting and fishing friend, and if I got hung up or anything out here, just to go to that friend, make myself known and he'd lend me a hand. That was enough for me. I just naturally stopped over, and took a cab at the station and said to the driver, "Know where Mr. William Bronze lives?" "Sure do," he said; and big as life we breezed up to your house. Mr. Bronze came home in an hour or two—time meant nothing to me, in my young life—and I introduced myself. He actually made out that he was glad to see me. I had dinner with you, though you've forgotten it, spent the evening talking to your Dad, a royal evening, slept in one of your big bed-chambers, and next day your father drove me in his own limousine to the train himself, bought me a basket of lunch, fruit, some magazines and books, and saw me off. I'll never forget it. Among other things, he said, "Now, remember, son"—always has called me "Son"—"when you get ready to go to work, just come to me."

Despite his woe, Dick took intense interest in the narra-

tive. After all, this pictured a side of his father's nature he needed to see. Reyburn looked at him narrowly and said:

‘ Does this bore you? ’

‘ No. Thank God. I needed this.’ Reyburn looked his astonishment and encouragement and proceeded:

‘ When I graduated, just a year ahead of you, I beat it out here, hotfoot. I think there must have been a hundred on the waiting list at the paper, but when I reminded your father of his promise, he said, “ Very well, go down stairs to the advertising department and tell Henderson to set you to work.” Then, can you beat the nerve of it, I said, “ No, I don't want the business end, but the editorial.” He never batted an eye, but just said, “ All right, go out and tell Mr. Brief to put you to work.” That's nearly two years ago, and the Boss has been good to me. I haven't seen him often, but he's always called me “ Son,” dropped a hand on my shoulder and asked how I'm getting along. He never commends any man's work, you know that; but he's been awful white to me.’

‘ Fine, bully, well — ’

‘ Now comes the rub, Richard. He wants me to do something that I can't quite — well, I'm loyal to him. I'd die for him. After the way he's — ’

‘ What is it he wants you to do? Snap it out! ’

‘ Maybe you can tell me what to do. Maybe I don't look at it right.’

‘ Hell, what is it? Don't keep me waiting! ’

‘ Well, it's this way. He knows, lots of us know, that old man Manger keeps a pretty little love-nest out south, with a pretty little widow in it. At the same time, he has a big family at home, boys and girls growing up, a whole schoolful of them, and a wife, fine woman and all that. They have a good social position, you know. Old Manger doesn't come

through with the display that the Boss thinks he ought to. He's blind to his own main chance and the good of the community and especially the Sentinel. I happen to know Manger pretty well, knew him back in New York State before he opened up his department store here. My folks know him. I know where the love-nest is. It's no secret down at the Sentinel. We've got a brown paper envelope in the filing cabinet, chock-full of the dope, but no direct evidence. The old man's been too smooth all the time. He leaves no tracks going or coming. You see — '

'Yes, I see.' Richard now spoke with bitterness supplanting his hope. 'I see only too well. My Dad wants to put the screws on Manger to get more lineage. Where do you come in? Or get off? Or what is it?'

'He wants me to get direct evidence, photographs, dictograph, finger-prints, the deadwood on the old man, and to do it, he wants me to hire out as chauffeur to Manger.'

'Chauffeur? Hell you say!'

'Yes, nothing less. Now I'd do most anything on earth for the Boss. I've just got through telling you. But — well, kind o' sticks in my craw, this thing. Can't quite get it down. Am I all wrong?'

'Why can't he get a private dick to do such a job?'

'He says he's employed a thousand of 'em first and last for such work and they never failed to gum the works. Worst set of fat-heads. Always brought him information he didn't want, and muffed what he did want, and cost him heavy expenses without results. You know how — how he is. Sort o' prejudiced when he gets a certain slant on something. Well, he's red-hot against dicks. Says he wants somebody with a brain in his skull.'

'Yes, I know it. I've heard him.'

'Well, what would you do in my place, Richard?'

‘I’d tell him to go straight — straight up. I’d tell him that’s not what I’m employed for. I’m not a detective but a reporter. Then I’d let him fire me — not married, are you?’

‘No. I could get a job all right. But I — I worship your old man. I — I wish he wouldn’t —’

‘So do I, Reyburn. What can we do? Nothing — but have a drink!’

Peter

Five years make a difference—a difference in the little cottage which sorely needs paint. To be sure, clambering June roses and vines hide a multitude of paintless sins against woodwork, but are they so good for the timbers? Nevertheless Peter Weld cannot help himself, nor help the little frame structure to a new summer coat. It has taken all of his efforts, resources, and even credits, to see Penelope through her four years of Wellesley. She has protested, time and again, but he has sworn that her refusal to keep on to graduation would bring down his white head—and all the rest of it.

He has borrowed the last possible dollar and gone on to her commencement. He has walked with her to Tupelo, to the banks of the Charles, by the old ice-house for a Sunday evening of sandwiches, bottles of sorts and a split pineapple. He has returned with her to her domicile at Wood Cottage, and walked to his lodgings in the village, just as he had done with another Wellesley senior, in the long ago; for five years have made no appreciable difference either in the rosy face, the white hair, or the sure step of Peter Weld.

While rowing Penelope on Lake Waban early in the morning of her commencement day, he glanced at the shady seat of Tupelo, and asked her if any young man had ever sat with her there—for the legend goes that such proceeding spells fate—and she had laughingly replied yes, that no less than five had done so. Who were they? Ned Engren, of course, many times over from Harvard; a Yale

Divinity 'theolog' named Simpson, a former football star, in his academic days, and now a missionary in Japan; a Latin instructor from Amherst, with horn-rimmed glasses and long dark face; Richard Bronze, back in New Haven a year ago for his class reunion — of course she had to take him to Tupelo, since he had come all the way to Wellesley just to see the new senior; and — any significance in her listing him last? — Hapwood Powers, divorced from his Communist wife who never was red-haired, never became fat, round, or square, but who grew darker, more angular and more militant in all possible ways every year of her married life.

'A theolog!' Her father looked at her amused, as she sat in the stern of the boat, full-figured, womanly, from her copper-tinted brown hair with the morning sun shining through to her tapering calves and ankles necessarily displayed in the short skirts of the period.

'Yes. He went with me to chapel one morning. He saw our old motto over the platform; "*Non ministrari sed ministrare.*" He looked quizzical and asked me to translate it. I gave him what perhaps he expected, our proverbial translation: "Not to be ministers but to be ministers' wives." He never came back again. Anyway, I wouldn't wish to live in Japan.'

'You never told me about Dick Bronze coming here.'

'Didn't I? Never thought of it, I suppose. Matter of no consequence.'

'Do you ever see him in Seminole?'

'Occasionally he drops in at Swann's in the summer, when I'm there. Not often.'

'Do you think he's settling into his father's shoes?'

'Could anybody, while William Bronze can move a foot or wiggle a toe? No. I think Richard is sincere when he

says he hates the System, declares against all horrors of cut-throat competition, and for some form of state socialism.'

'Do you — do you think he still likes you, Penny?'

'Yes. Just as always. Takes his No patiently, and says he'll wait until I have got my education, that is, my degree. I expect him to ask me again when I get home.'

'And you'll say — '

'I don't know.'

'Penny, don't let the unhappiness of Chris destroy yours.'

'No Bronze is necessary to my happiness, not yet.'

'And Happy Powers? Have you seen him lately?'

'Last week. He came for the prom. Doing something over at Cambridge at the same time. Happy'd never come all the way just to see a woman.'

'How does he look?'

'Same as ever, but manicured. You see, he's a Communist agitator now. Runs a red office in New York and harangues the unemployed and discontented all over the country. Goes wherever there's trouble and stirs up more. Doesn't work with his hands now but says he uses his brains. He has plenty. Don't know how much of it is fallow. I wish he could see more of you, Peter.'

'Thank you, Penny, but why?'

'Perfectly obvious. I think you might save his sanity and usefulness. And — and he's worth saving.'

'So's Dick. I'm sure I don't know which is more worth saving.'

'Neither do I. And, Daddy, we'd better go ashore. Breakfast time at Wood Cottage.'

Very compensating, all that extra indebtedness he had incurred to see her in cap and gown receiving her diploma. Splendid girls, nearly all of them, admirably fitted for careers or motherhood; but very sure was Peter that no

one of them could quite measure up to Penny. Not over partial he felt himself, not blinded by father-love; cool in his estimate. He saw her limitations, the defects of her qualities, the streak of wildness which to his mind only revealed her strength. He knew her sensitiveness, romanticism, which would always make her feel more keenly than most, suffer more intensely. She would always, in spirit if not in the flesh, dance in the moonlight, barefoot on the world's wet grass. She could fight, too, and endure. He sighed, even in his exhilaration where he sat in the audience with other parents whose hearts were heaving like his, and in his thought added, 'She will fight and endure.'

Yes, well worth the debt. Now she and he together must set to work to pay it off. Very well, they could. She would not begin to earn at once. She could not go back to Swann's, as she had done all other summers if she carried out her idea of preparing in the Teachers' college for a job in some high school, not old Central, of course, too much to aspire to as yet. Still Swann's wanted to make a place for her in the buying department; they had confidence in her at Swann's; held out hope to her of becoming a buyer for them semiannually in New York or Paris.

'Which would you do, Peter?'

'One is just as honorable as the other, just as dignified. You know my feeling about women in business. Men ought to have the jobs if possible, unless the women actually have to take them in order to eat. But there's no use preaching such doctrine. The women will keep on taking the jobs, and I don't see that it's any different to take them in the schools or in business. It's all one. Besides, you can say truly that to pay off debts is to prepare to eat. I'm far along in years, Penny and—'

'Hush, Peter Weld, you're a better man at sixty-five than

most of them at thirty-five. And you'll work for twenty more years, your best work.'

'It is not a day of miracles, my dear; and you know I'm well beyond sixty-five. Three-score and ten, the line still runs.'

'Not so. Just because an old Hebrew poet sang that by some shepherd camp-fire three or four thousand years ago! Why Peter Weld! And you a scientist! You know science has lengthened the span of human life by ten good years.'

'Well, well. Let it go, Penny.'

The pair now sat, that June night in the middle of the decade, behind the vines of the little front porch, Peter in a big wicker chair, Penelope in a small straight green one. He kept on:

'Times are good, that's true. You know well that I think it's only temporary. I don't want to croak, but—well, take advantage of the apparent prosperity we may, we must. We owe two thousand dollars on this little place. I did my best, as you know—'

'I'll say you did, Peter, dear. You know how it hurt my heart to think of you as you were, here alone, trudging out in all weathers to your meals, and working your head off—'

'Hush, child. I enjoyed it. I like solitude.'

'All right, then I'll go away again instanter.'

'Don't. You know what I mean.'

'Yes, Peter.'

'And I lived at the club at all hours but working hours, and learned from the young men and preached my gospel.'

'They profited more than you. I'll bet they swarmed round you, the ones worth while, the discerning ones.'

'They're very good to me. I think they pitied my loneliness. Such courtesy and sympathy is very beautiful. Their pity never shamed me.'

‘Why, Peter, you blind old goose, old owl! Do you think young men bore themselves by seeking out some old codger to pity? Can’t you ever see that you’re a — a magnet, a lodestone to young men? They come to you as they did to Socrates! You’re forever thanking them for coming to see you, and I’m forever laughing at you for it, you dear old simpleton, wise old owl! Wise and blind!’

‘Well, well, it’s a fair exchange maybe. I certainly get as much as I give. Anyway, your four years away are over. Now we’ll begin again to live unless —’

‘Unless what, Peter?’

‘Unless you go off to Paris buying goods for Swann’s.’

Penelope laughed aloud at this and said:

‘Oh, is that all? I thought you were going to say, unless I married and left you. And do you think I ever shall? Whoever marries me must marry Peter Weld, too. As for Paris, that’s a long way in the future.’

* *

Ned Engren came first, as was natural. Peter arose to go in, but Penny stopped him.

‘No, Daddy. Ned’s only on the fly as usual. Not so, Ned?’

‘Yes, I’m on the way to a dance. I promised, or I wouldn’t go. It’s hot! These glad rags — think — a boiled shirt in a temperature of ninety-odd. How do you like being at home, old dear? Scrumptious, isn’t it?’

‘You’ll be operating some day in a long white gown and a gauze mask at a hundred degrees.’

‘That’s a long way in the future, as I heard you say when I came in the gate. I say, Penny, come on to the dance. Don’t have to have invitations these days. You can bring whom you please. I’d love to have you. You’re not dressed?’

Oh, pshaw! What do you call it? That rig you got on, all white, you'd put any gal in the shade that's on that floor, wouldn't she, Mr. Weld?'

'Goes without saying, my boy, as the French put it. Where is the dance?'

'At the Country Club. C'mon, Penny. I've got Matilda on the string, but she won't mind your horning in.'

Ned's enthusiasm did not kindle Penny's. Seldom did nowadays. He used to sweep her off her feet five, six years ago, but with the passage of time he had become a breeze blowing by. He'd make a wonderful doctor, with all that effervescence. What a bed-side manner! What courage he would put into a patient! And that little moustache, almost pure white, some day he'd be old enough to go without it. And those blue eyes, big, round, always surprised, and that very red mouth always open, as he said himself, open day and night, and his six feet of bony strength, oh yes, an admirable physician and surgeon. Truly an exhilarating breeze blowing by and always going somewhere. Pretty soon he went.



Next came Dick Bronze. Penny had said he would come after her. He did. Again she saw him first, his hand on the gate, and whispered to her father:

'Don't go in, Peter Weld. Stay where you are. Don't leave me.' Surely that was emphatic enough. Peter stayed, and spoke first:

'Glad to see you, Richard. Come in. Sit down.'

He noted the restrained greeting between Penny and Dick. Only once in five years had they met more than casually, that time he came to see her at Wellesley. She must have cut him deeply that Christmas day. She had finally told

her father, and confessed to him that she was fighting then for self-preservation as much as for the defeat and the cure of Richard Bronze which she felt assured was the only safety for them both.

Richard showed the effect of those five years, graver, some lines in his face; study and thought had made early marks. Peter knew how the boy had sought to educate himself, indeed had counselled and guided Richard in his study. No less frequent than before, the long conferences in the den and library during Penny's four years away at college. Peter had shown Richard that education only begins with a degree, that the university only shows a man how to educate himself; and Richard had acted upon the suggestion. Those five years had written characters upon his face, yes, and character.

Peter knew — anybody who read the papers knew even if Dick had not told him — that Richard had not lived the life of a solitary during all that time, that he had gone a great deal with the smart set, that he had kept and extended his acquaintance with all sorts and conditions, at clubs, chambers of commerce, even labor unions and socialist and communist meetings. No more active young man about town than Dick Bronze, none better known and liked. Penny too knew all this.

Richard wore his clothes as no other man of her acquaintance — his white pin-striped trousers, white and black sport shoes, his brown coat, his blue shirt, white-and-blue striped tie. His reddish blond hair rippled just enough, his little moustache still neither more nor less than a quarter of an inch long in the wings. Peter watched Penny surveying Richard, and noted that her breath came faster and even in the half-light, her color came. She had little ordinarily. Here was science meeting capitalism; science embodied in the fairest form, no red-clad violence, but seeking even-

handed justice with cool intelligence; capitalism equally fair in outward seeming, apparently open-eyed, avowedly seeking the same justice for all, but somewhat dazed as to how to woo and win science in partnership and mutual service. Strange, anomalous situation, thought Peter Weld, occurring perhaps for the first time in the history of what we call civilization. It looked hopeful; but who could say whether the whole relation between science and private property might not go upon the rocks of defeat and wreck? In answer to a question from Penelope Richard was saying:

‘Yes, Jane’s well. Hard at a number of things. She is the busiest woman in Seminole. She has some nerves, and takes them out on horseback. She’s very mature and executive. She looks stronger and more beautiful to me all the time, but —’

Nobody prompted him, so nobody knows what that adversative statement might have been. Answering Peter Weld, he said: ‘Oh, Dad’s fine. He’s a marvel. Nobody would know he’s seventy-odd. He keeps it dark. He doesn’t let even Who’s Who print the year of his birth. You know Dad amuses me. The doctors no sooner tell him to cut out something than he wants to make me and all the rest of the world forego the same. He had to give up golf, which he used to play well. None of us ever beat him. We didn’t dare to. I’ve thrown many a game, or counted myself out, so he could win; so have all the wise ones who played with him. Now the doctors have told him to slow up, and he loudly maintains that golf is a waste of time, none of his employees ought to play golf. He used to take a high-ball now and then, never drank much; but they told him to lay off of that. Now such a prohibitionist you never saw. Liquor is the cause of all inefficient work and all unemployment. He used to smoke a cigarette or two a day. He got it into his head it

was bad for him, and now whenever he sees one of us smoking a fag he is convinced we're soldiering on the job and is not mealy-mouthed about telling us so. He used to love filet mignon and rare roast beef above everything, but they took him off of red meats; and he won't allow any of us to eat anything but fish and chicken, with vegetables and fruits and whole wheat. I never can look a chicken in the face or a fish in the mouth!

Richard laughed good-humoredly, but his hearers could perceive the irritation underneath the light words. He seemed quite aware of the egoism betrayed by the peculiarities of a father whom none the less he admired. One could see that when the time came he could join battle with that father, but highly respect his enemy the while. These personalities out of the way, he turned to Penelope and said:

‘Now, Miss Bachelor-of-Arts, what new worlds?’

‘The business world rather attracts me.’

‘Come work in the steel mill.’

‘No women there.’

‘Oh, yes, an office full. I need a secretary right now. Alec Drum has given me an old frump that — oh, she does her work well enough, like a robot; but I believe there's something in estheticism, don't you?’

‘Something dangerous sometimes.’ Penny followed his light tone.

‘I like danger, like to live dangerously.’

‘But discretion — no, I'm going with Swann's, I think.’

‘Same old job? It's not good enough for an A.B.’

‘They will promote me. Perhaps send me to New York or Paris.’

‘To live?’ Richard could not suppress the dismay, even if he tried to.

‘Oh, no. To buy. And if so, I’m going to take father.’

‘Oh!’ Evident relief, that she did not mean to expatriate herself.

‘We don’t sell any steel to Paris, but we do to New York.’

‘Ah?’ That’s all she said; but the three knew she meant ‘Perfectly incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial.’

After a little discussion of the relative value of the business life or the teaching profession, in which the votes of all three went for business, the talk turned to Communism. Richard said:

‘I’ve been going to meetings Wednesday and Saturday nights at 1622½ Center Street, upstairs in a room bordered in red, with red-striped sash curtains, a red-striped table, and red-legged chairs, a library and a debating room, and the debating room twice as big as the library. They’re not a militant bunch. There is a rabid headquarters, farther down town where everybody advocates incendiaryism with waving hands, clenched fists, towed hair, and anaemic faces, but I don’t often go there.’

‘I’d think you’d be in danger, even at the milder place, with all your capitalist clothes and appearance,’ Penny said.

‘Not at all. They try to convert me. Think I could aid the cause. I’m like a man on crutches at a Christian Science shop. I’m the cynosure of all eyes, the recipient of all attention.’

‘That why you like it?’ Penny could not resist the slight jibe. He caught it but chose to ignore it.

‘Perhaps, though I haven’t probed my own motives. I just get a kick out of it, and stimulation for thought. Now there came in last Saturday night a new voice, new figure. At least I never saw him before. Good looking chap, big, dark, shock-headed, well dressed, clean. He’s an organizer or something for the party, and has been over to Russia two or

three times to observe. He is blind to everything there but the successes. He belonged in the militant camp. I don't know how he happened to stray in among these parlor-bolshies, who only talk. They all seemed to know him and sort o' look up to him. It seems he has a big reputation among them. They have a couple of his books in the library. They asked him lots of questions and referred everything to him.'

'What's his name? Perhaps I may have heard of him,' asked Peter Weld.

'Powers. I'd never read anything by him, but maybe—'

'Hapwood Powers? Did they call him "Happy"?' Penny spoke with an eagerness Richard could not understand.

'I believe that is his first name, though no one called him anything but Mr. Powers. I saw his books in the library and looked into them. Yes, he had a name something like that.'

'Daddy, if it's "Happy" Powers why do you suppose he hasn't been to see us?'

'I'm sure I don't know unless — unless he knows we couldn't go along with him all the way to Communism. Remember, he was bent that way when he was here, years ago — how long was that?'

'Six years,' promptly the answer came. Richard wondered a little at her exact knowledge of the time. 'I was fifteen.'

'If he'd got a place here with your steel-works, Richard, he never would have gone Communist.'

'No, I suppose if every Communist had always had a job, there'd have been none.'

'I don't know that that follows, but maybe, maybe. Yes, if everybody had work, the old system would be a success. We must find a system that will, or else —'

'Or else the country will go red?'

‘ If too many are out of work and stay out long enough. Perfectly plain.’

Peter Weld obeyed his daughter, stayed with her and Richard on the porch, and his best working hours went by as the three discussed the future of the capitalistic system until midnight.



Miss Penelope Weld no longer stood behind a counter in Swann’s exposed to public contacts and to the hardening influence of inexorable, cold-hearted trade. Her father feared for her when she chose a business career instead of an academic one, warning her of that crushing weight of concentrated selfishness which characterizes humanity when dealing with mere things. He said he had watched young women harden under it, their faces grow lined in a way he did not like, their natures coarsen.

‘ But, Daddy, it all depends on the way one faces it, doesn’t it? ’ she sent the question across the seven o’clock breakfast table the day she began at Swann’s. ‘ And teaching school! You know that any girl who teaches school long enough becomes fossilized, fed-up, nervously impossible, warped to a pattern, waspish, vinegary.’

‘ You’ve quite a vocabulary, my dear. But again, it’s a question of how she faces it, isn’t it? A girl may go the same road as wife and mother. It’s not so likely, though. Yes, I recommend wifehood and motherhood. You — ’

‘ Not yet, Daddy. Wait until my knight comes riding out of the forest.’

Her words brought back the Indian summer morning when an inebriated knight came out of the hedge fence and the thicket to find her dancing in the dew. Richard had come to the cottage as often as he dared during that month

of June which she gave herself for vacation. Usually the three of them sat and talked it out on the little porch. Ned Engren breezed in and breezed out and nobody seemed to mind. He never stayed longer than the big-winged night moths which hung round the honey-suckle.

At last came 'Happy' Powers, one evening. He had changed. He dressed conventionally, neatly, correctly, even if his garb hung rather loosely about his big-boned shoulders, torso and limbs. As before he seemed far more conscious of Peter Weld than of Penelope. He wanted to convert the old scholar, called Peter's theories of state socialism bread-pills and sweetened water, declared that the men now in command would no more take such stuff than they'd return to the pap and the bottle, and if they should it would no more restrain the wolves in society than exhortations to be nice, good little boys would tame a bunch of bootleggers and underworld hoodlums, kidnappers and gunmen. No, nothing but the strong hand, revolution, fire and the stone wall would wrest power away from the men who held it.

'I've felt their power in Pittsburgh. I've been on strike and faced their machine guns. I've patrolled and looked into the eyes of the blue-eyed militia-boys of the type that obeyed them in France to the last agony. I've inhaled their mustard-gas. I know 'em. You've read of 'em, Mr. Weld, but I know 'em first hand.'

'Law can manage them.'

'Can it? Look at the Sherman law. Why doesn't it restrain them?'

'I know — the inevitable combinations of industry in a machine world.'

'Yes. And all the machines should be owned by those who make them. Then they'll be controlled. The State is

the only just owner and employer, the State made up of the workers.'

Round and round and round. Before the evening had gone, almost without perceiving how her father had brought it about, Penelope found Happy talking of himself, his past, and his outlook. Yes, quite a long life already for a man of thirty. Yes, that's true, Chris is thirty, but he never had seemed as old as this man. She wondered if he now did, over there in China, doing such marvellous work for the Associated Press. Happy even talked freely of his wife, a writer of stories and articles, a free lance of the freest sort, a little dark thing that never stayed still but flitted about from place to place, now New York, now West Virginia, now Georgia, reporting for Communist papers and occasionally landing a piece in the Nation or the World Tomorrow. Domestic? No, nothing domestic about her. They had set up housekeeping at Bethlehem in a three-room cottage, but the house kept itself except for Happy. He beat the rugs himself on Sundays, washed the dishes every other day when he got home from the mill.

'It wasn't in her, that's all.' He laughed good-humoredly as he told of the impossible household. 'She was the best-hearted girl in the world, but all her heart was in the Cause. She is fitted for life in a workers' home, but nowhere else. Capitalistic society is no home for her. Gone six weeks at a time, she seldom wrote to me. She had no idea of a family. The family is out of date for such as her. I don't know whether the family can survive in the Communist state—or for that matter in the capitalist. It seems to me it's petering out.'

Happy Powers looked wistfully into the darkness of the June night, and not at Peter or Penelope, as he ruminated. Something sad about the man, thought Peter Weld. He's

afire with his crusade, mistaken crusade, but he's not at peace without or within. He's hungry with a world-old hunger. Something's calling to him that called to the cave-man, the nomad shepherd, the viking pirate, something that has called across all the seas and the prairies and the mountains, something that storm, and battle, and exile and bloody barricades could not still, the voice of home. He has no home, this unhappy man called 'Happy.' Nearing the middle of his journey through this world, and still no home, no place to lay his head. Extreme in his views, even jaundiced, because he has no home. Takes a balanced mind, indeed, to stand that stress too long and not go off. Peter understood.



Richard got Penelope into his roadster one evening, a new one recently exchanged for last year's model. Peter had a commission to fill, an article, which must go off by next morning's mail, and Penny could not bring herself to disturb him. She had refused so long to drive with Richard; and she could not avoid close quarters with him on the porch any more than in the car unless somebody came, and nobody seemed inclined to come. Ned had flown in and flown out long ago.

As they drove far out beyond the last limits of the city, and only farm-house and filling station lights rivalled those of passing cars, Richard turned into a side road, and brought the roadster to a stop under a high hedge, with a solitary elm overhanging it. The moon overhung that. A provocative night. Hastily Penny wondered, her heart beating fast, for how many over the world this would prove a fateful night. She knew she could not fend off the question that Dick had been trying all June to ask. It came.

'Penny, you know how long I've loved you. Five years.

That's a hell of a long time, these days. I've tried to love somebody else.'

'Who?' Penny could not repress the impudence, despite the apparent encouragement.

'Whom!' he corrected.

'Acknowledged. Whom?'

'Shall I list them one by one, or will half of them do? Oh, any girl, every girl, that seemed—seemed—'

'Eligible in your stratum?'

'Yes, and I've even aspired to yours in some cases. One or two intellectuals. But no soap. Penny, it's you or nobody.'

'Oh, bosh. If I married, you'd marry soon after.'

'Put it that way, maybe you're right. I'll be honest, though it may not be romantic or diplomatic. But one thing's as certain as that north star, see it, over your left shoulder, I'll never marry until you do, and then if I don't marry you, 'twill be purely biological, to continue the name of Bronze on earth. Maybe it isn't worth continuing. I'm honestly humble about it, Penny. I don't know. I don't think I'd have the heart to marry, if you chose someone else. I can't see it now. I only say that maybe, maybe, I'd go the way of almost all the rest of the world. I've loved you too long, too deeply, too truly, ever to get over it. I'm not a kid now, though I was when I first loved you. I know my mind. I'll keep on asking you, if you only give me a chance, till you quit saying no. Will you marry me, Penny?'

'Haven't you still any resentment for the way I drove you off that Christmas day, and told you I hated you? Haven't you any pride and manhood?'

'Some manhood, I hope. Little pride. No. I—I have hoped all this time you were—pardon me, dear, if I presume

— fighting yourself as well as me that day. A sort of defence mechanism.'

'You're quite a psychologist!' Penny's wild streak would not down. Maybe she felt still further need to fight. At all events, she could not see that the situation had changed. The Bronze businesses still dominated Seminole, still pirated the lives of thousands. Richard more than ever had been built into the Bronze fabric, part of it, responsible for it. This new roadster bought with the same sort of sweat-and-blood money that had bought its lineal ancestor five years ago. Chris exiled out yonder in China, either going native or wearing his heart out in work and loneliness as all exiles in the Far East have to do, all on account of the big Bronze machine and its arrogance. Richard an accessory. How had the situation changed? Yet this young man, this strong young man so humble, so pleading, so honest; and then this damn moon; and that field yonder! She felt an almost irresistible desire to skin through that hedge some way and dance in that field. In childhood and adolescence that had been her means of escape—dancing in the night, dancing almost in the altogether. Life again wanted to catch her, clamp down on her. It was catching and clamping. Wasn't she going into the store in a few days or weeks? Now this boy—no, this man—this taking man, taking hold of her in spite of herself—no, not literally; he did not touch her even with foot or finger, she'd hand him that—doing his utmost, a powerful utmost, she could not deny that, to draw her into a home with him, to have Bronze children with him, to share his hateful aristocracy of pure adulterated money with him.

She sprang from the car; she found a gap in the hedge; she ran out upon the blue-grass, throwing down her light

wrap as she went; she began the slow movements, hands aloft, or outstretched, waving, undulating; she tip-toed and suddenly ran, dance-stepping, as fast as she could and faded into the moonlight. Richard followed across the grass, half-laughing, and calling, 'Penny, come back! I don't know whose pasture this is. I don't know who'll run into you! Penny!' She made him no answer except in a low soft voice and eluded him whenever he came near, once more to fade into the silvered misty light. After an hour of this hide-and-seek, she came back of her own will, breathing softly and evenly, a slight flush, very slight, upon her face.

He pinned her down to no answer that night.



Peter Weld had heard of the activities of Hapwood Powers in Seminole. The irrepressible young Communist had bombarded the Bronze Steel Works with propaganda in the shape of pamphlets and brochures, had buttonholed and besieged key-men in the crews, and had sought to make all the trouble he could. In addition, he had been making speeches not only at the meetings in both Communist headquarters but also of Saturday afternoons on street corners in the north end of the city. Peter, desiring to see his friend in action, took occasion to walk by Third and Center Streets on Saturday in midsummer and keep one eye out for soap-boxes. He succeeded in finding what he looked for.

'Happy' Powers more nearly justified his pseudonym, as he stood talking at the street-corner to a group of derelicts, unemployed, workers off for their half-holiday, and passing hoboes and hitch-hikers, than when conversing alone with Peter Weld. He spoke with some heat, gesticulating now and then, but never frantically, his face showing passion but well controlled. Strong face, good face, kind face, inclined

to sadness, too much wistfulness for so young a man. Peter watched and listened. Undoubtedly sincere, no mistaking that. Whether content and unified in mind, quite a different matter. Economic determinism, dictatorship of the proletariat, unearned increment, Marxian ethics, all the old catchwords rolled from the lips of Happy Powers just as if he were indeed talking to comrades who could understand; but there was enough of the vernacular of the discontented, enough denunciation of soulless corporations, blood-sucking employers, heartless capitalists, and the greedy, grasping fist, for the most unlearned to take in.

Hapwood marked the approach of Peter while the white-haired scientist strolled towards the little crowd, a half-block away. Alert enough, those brown eyes, under long turned-up black lashes, darting hither and thither so that every listener felt he was directly singled out for especial attention. Strong enough the bass voice to reach Peter a half-block away. Undoubtedly an orator of parts, this Hapwood Powers. Given a proper setting, a great occasion, and a message into which his whole mind and personality could hurl itself, no knowing what he might accomplish. Peter Weld yearned to unify that mind. He recognized its strength.

Soon after Peter arrived Happy sought to draw him into debate. Evidently the speaker loved heckling and interruption, as a spur to his own flank. Opposition only called out his resources. He felt a glow when he could pulverize an objector with facts and figures which, if not accurate, nobody could gainsay; though Happy had evidently thoroughly prepared himself by long study and observation. Few in the nation could successfully cross swords with him. Peter, however, would not allow himself to be drawn into controversy. He knew this was no time or place to shake the convictions of the orator, and that argument in crowds only hardens

minds. He preferred to take Hapwood on when alone. When appealed to directly and by name to express an opinion, the old gentleman replied:

‘I agree with your diagnosis of the diseases in our System, in the main, but have rather different ideas as to the cure. I agree that capitalism is sick, the emphasis upon the sacred rights of private property in this country greater than the emphasis upon human life; but the road to liberation I believe to be a longer, slower road, more gradual, and less earth-shaking than you have pictured. I am for patience and parliamentary procedure.’

‘Patience is part of our disease! It’s the infection. Parliamentary procedure is a Turkish bath, when what we need is a surgical operation.’

The crowd cheered.

‘I’d like to debate the question of direct action versus parliamentary procedure with you, Professor Weld.’

‘Find us a suitable platform and occasion, Mr. Powers, and I’m your huckleberry.’ Peter grinned. The crowd turned and looked at him with smiles, respect and more cheers.

‘At Communist headquarters a week from tonight!’ exclaimed Happy.

‘Which headquarters, the militant one or the — the studious one?’ Peter laughed with his head thrown back, at his own implication.

‘Either you say! I suppose you’d prefer what you call the studious one.’

‘Yes. I think I’d meet some open minds there. You’ll pack the place with your comrades, anyway, I suppose, at either place; but no church or forum or Chamber of Commerce or club would have a room to spare for us to speak in. So I’ll meet you on your own ground, and heaven help me!’

The crowd laughed heartily at the old man's invocation and he won friends. Happy, moved more than any of the rest, soon brought his harangue to a close by inviting all and sundry to 1622½ Center Street at eight o'clock one week from that evening, and descended from his precarious platform, pushed his way through to Peter Weld, and took his arm to walk toward the street-car that would take the old man to his home.



Hapwood ended by getting on the car with Peter, going all the way to the bungalow, accepting an invitation to the dinner which Penny was 'tossing together,' for she had brought most of it home with her in cartons. She knew Hapwood Powers had grown accustomed to eating out of cartons, boxes, even tomato cans, during his wandering workman's life. She knew by this time, too, that his way of life was purely voluntary. In the years since Harvard he had taken night school courses in law, and the bar examinations of Pennsylvania and other states, and could at any moment connect with firms of his acquaintance among the radical lawyers, and get a lucrative practice without sacrificing his convictions concerning reform. Even in Russia, where attorneys are at a discount, Penny knew he had been offered employment at a fixed salary, a good living as that country goes, and on account of his English and knowledge of American affairs, an honored position. He felt, however, that his call lay at home, to spread the Cause.

'And you're going to debate my Dad? Go easy on him, Happy.'

'I'll certainly be considerate, Miss Weld.' Happy evidently thought her intercession in Peter's behalf serious.

'You'd better give all your attention to taking care of

yourself, my lad!' She laughed at him, 'You've never seen Peter on a rampage, have you?'

'Lay on, Macduff!' Peter spoke softly.

'Yes, he packs a wallop, Happy Powers.'

'You're in a conspiracy to get my goat in advance. That's good tactics, but I'm getting to be an old war-horse myself.' None of the three knew that the debate never would come off.

Penny had never asked her father to stay close beside her when Hapwood Powers sat on their front porch. She feared him, yes, but not in the same way she feared Richard Bronze. When, therefore, the conversation on that stifling July night developed principally between her and Hapwood, and when no other callers appeared, Peter at last excused himself on the ground of pressing work, saying, 'Don't go, Hapwood; because I am retiring to my den. You children stay here and talk. It's cooler than anywhere else in the city. You'll be doing Penny a service, Happy, really you will, and Penny, haven't you some home-brew left out in the ice-box?'

'Tell me about Russia,' began Penelope, when their pewter mugs, full and cold, stood beside them, and their cigarettes glowed. She knew the way to excite his immediate interest in the conversation. He told her, while his cigarette went out, just as it had done six years ago, and she smiled in the night. She listened deeply interested both in what he said and in him who said it. A certain simplicity in his nature revealed itself to her, in his face-value estimate of all he had seen and heard in the Soviet Union. He saw no reason why the same things might not be done in a nation of free and independent farmers and workmen which had been accomplished in a population of peasants and almost serfs. When he had told in some detail the accomplishments of the five-year plan, in which he would admit no marked failures,

the progress in education, the growth of jurisprudence and penology, the flourishing state of art and music, the devotion of the Communist party, the enthusiasm and rigorous, even puritanical, morality of the boy and girl Pioneers and Komsomols, she asked him about the women.

‘They’re splendid women. A bit husky, taken by and large, for our standards. Square-built women capable of any tasks that men do. Yet I saw many who would stand comparison with the most spirituelle types in western Europe or America. There are some beautiful women. One Georgian young married woman. One young girl, Marie, eighteen, and engaged to a man thirty-three. She was head office woman in a large coöp-factory at Novo Sibiersk. She had the face of a Madonna! Perfect coloring! ’

‘What coloring?’

‘Blondish hair, gold in fact; and apple-blossom skin.’

‘Ah!’ assented Penny.

‘She was perfect of her type. You know others are perfect of their type. You—’ He seemed just to have discovered her as a woman and saw the corner into which he had driven himself. With a delicacy, however, of which she did not know him capable, he dropped the matter there. She had to break the silence.

‘Divorce very free and easy in Russia?’

‘Yes. By mutual consent, or indeed the desire of either one. Yet the figures run about the same in the Soviet Union as in America.’

‘Do you regard divorce as a misfortune? We talk so much of the divorce evil.’

‘Where children are involved, yes. Where either of a pair is deeply in love, yes. Where love is gone, no. I consider it a liberation. As in my own case. I think I never was in love—’

‘That’s what they all say, isn’t it? Nobody ever believes himself in love in the past tense unless it has lasted — only in the present tense. And does it ever last for life?’

‘Oh, I think so. Surely.’ He looked at her astonished.

‘I thought all Communists purely biological in their views of love. Mating for the moment, or the duration of the romance. Changing at will.’ Penny drawled with an affectation of indifference. He believed her utterly detached, but he could not see the rising and falling of her full bosom. She had not entirely forgotten a budding romance of the long ago.

‘Maybe most of them hold such views in theory. I think they do in Russia. But, for myself, I’ve always hoped something with the fine beauty of romance might come my way, sometime. Maybe it’s too good to be true, too heavenly for mortals.’

‘Then you do believe in a heaven?’

‘As a figure of speech. Yes, I do believe in a heaven on earth. I’ve just finished saying so. That’s what a lasting love would do to us, isn’t it? Put us in heaven?’ Suddenly he realized that the plural pronoun, ‘us,’ laid itself open to ambiguity. It might mean the human race; it might mean the two sitting there sipping beer. Once more he showed himself too delicate to explain, while Penny smiled again in the dark. Let him tangle up his thoughts, inwardly chuckled this spider, concerning this big black moth. He tangled me one time and broke my fifteen-year-old heart without knowing what he’d done. Went off and left me enmeshed. Turn about. She’d even help to tangle him. She said:

‘If you are not referring to the human race at large, I can follow your supposition. Yes, heavenly is the word for life-long romance. But what would it do to careers? Can a

man happily in love ever do great things — like overturning a civilization? Or can a woman steeped in love ever do anything but coddle her lover? ’

‘ Why not? Oh, I think such a love would only spur a man to his best efforts. I’m sure I — well, a woman like you, for instance, if — if — I mean of course, with your — antecedents, culture, mentality — if — I’m just supposing, you know. I — ’

Poor Communist! Look out for your detached and unprejudiced theories, of state, biology, science. You’re up against the embodiment of science, also, just as Dick Bronze was, a month ago — a past master of more sciences than your blundering boyish mind ever dreamed of, for all your marrying and your soap-boxing and your book-writing. She’s no fifteen-year-old now, but a skilled specialist and woman of the world. One little twist of that little hand that does not hold the pewter-mug and has dropped its cigarette-stub over the porch rail onto the grass, and your long legs will hopelessly tie themselves up in a gossamer web, tough as steel-wire. No mere man is a match for her. Look out! Too late! You’re gone! At last, at long last, you’ve opened your eyes in the dark, like an owl, and discovered — Penny Weld. She was drawling again:

‘ Most great and successful men have been unhappily married, haven’t they? Lincoln, for instance, shoved out from home by Mary Todd, after burying Ann Rutledge, made to eat crackers and cheese for evening dinner on a goods box in front of a grocery store. Made him leader of the nation. Socrates and Xantippe. Shakespeare and Ann — ’

‘ Now for God’s sake don’t cite Napoleon next.’

‘ No. Not great enough,’ she said.

‘ Good. What d’you say to Disraeli, Browning, Stalin, on the other side? ’

‘Hold on! Don’t make any mistakes. You’ve called the roll.’

‘A good woman inspires a man.’

‘I knew you’d say “good woman” before you got far. Same old stuff.’

‘Oh, I don’t mean good that way. I mean good like harts-horn, good like — like ginger, good like champagne, sparkling, effervescent, heady, sometimes like a daemon.’

‘Yes, and I know what you mean by that!’ Penny laughed frankly; her fear of this man faded in a sort of intoxication and exultation.

‘Oh, honestly, Penny. I — mean daemon in the sense of an inspiring spirit.’

‘Let it go at that, then. You’re very eloquent at times.’

‘I think I might be if — if ever any such glorious thing came into my life as — as the kind of love we’ve been talking about.’

‘I’m sure you might. Then she might have to be mean to you, at times, to drive you out upon the roads of the world.’

‘Oh, please don’t.’



William Bronze took luncheon at home these days. Well beyond seventy, although few knew it, he never divulged it, and he did not look it; the doctors, whom he set to watch him like a hawk, advised him to rest a couple of hours in the middle of the day, from the fast and furious game he played, the game of grab-money, grab-power. He approached the main door of the office of the *Sentinel*, over which in large letters ran the famous motto: ‘The Home of Justice and Fraternity.’

He glanced up at it in the glare of the July sun at 104 in the shade; he did not need to read the motto; it was graven on his heart, and he believed in it with might and main. He

believed in it just as he believed in the motto in big caps often, yes always, displayed somewhere under the title of his sheet, the Seminole Sentinel: 'The Best Newspaper in the U. S. A.—First in Everything.' He believed in that, too, just as he believed in the words of Stephen Decatur, which Bill Bronze nailed to his masthead in every issue for many long years: 'My country, may she be always right; but my country, right or wrong!'

Now he disdained to go the long way round to the elevator, but mounted the iron stairs through the business office to the city-room on the second floor. His white suit and blue tie looked jaunty, as his step seemed dauntless. The sun shone on all his enterprises even as upon his city of Seminole. Did it shine in his heart? Apparently, though a deeper sternness had come and made its dwelling-place there. His step lagged not at all, nor his shoulders bowed, as he strode with a corpulent but soldierly bearing through the roomful of desks and clatter, toward his office in the corner. Mr. Brief, the managing editor, met him with some pages of copy-paper, and showed him some telegraphic news for late editions. At last, in an indifferent voice, Ned Brief said:

'And, Boss, here's an A. P. dispatch I already sent down for the final. You remember that boy Weld. Used to be on our staff. I played it up. Really local, you know.'

William Bronze took the paragraph of typewritten stuff and read:

'Christopher Weld, A. P. representative American papers, Shanghai, killed today in forced landing of new plane being delivered to nationalist government at Nanking. Ship came down in Yangtze River. Bodies of Weld and Chinese pilot not recovered.'

Instantly William Bronze was galvanized into activity. He said in incisive tones:

‘Stop my car before it gets away for home. I’m going to Peter Weld. Look up his house in the telephone book, get me the address, and tell him I’m on the way; but don’t tell him what for.’

Thus it happened that the Bronze limousine stood in front of the cottage where Richard’s roadster had so often paused. Thus, too, it happened that Peter Weld stood at the open door to welcome his boyhood friend, perplexed and a little apprehensive. Nearly everybody honored by a visit from William Bronze quaked a bit and thought over his record and wondered what the publisher had discovered about him. Peter had no fears of this sort, but expected a request to write something which he knew in advance he would have to decline to do. Maybe Bill Bronze wished to stop the debate at the Communist Hall, three days hence; but why? Nobody had heard of it except by telephone. The papers wouldn’t print a line about it. Oh, yes, there had been dodgers, but why should Bill Bronze condescend to notice a harmless little dodger? No, Peter gave it up.

When he saw William’s face, he knew something grave had happened. No suave smile. No jaunty air. A slow step brought an old man, an old friend, up the walk and into the darkened library, blinded against afternoon sun.

‘Sit down, William.’

‘Thank you, Peter. You sit down. I have some news to tell you—’

‘Penny’s hurt? Is it bad?’

‘No. Not that. Not Penelope. We have an A. P. dispatch from Shanghai—’

‘Chris! He’s—he’s dead?’

‘He’s badly hurt—accident—airplane.’

‘He’s dead. I—I understand.’ Peter Weld sat silent in his chair. William Bronze could not see in the dimness that

he moved or stretched a muscle. It would have taken a shrewder reporter than Bill Bronze, even in plain light, to see more than the blanched face under the white hair, to see the whitened knuckles over the arms of the big leather chair, the tense chords in neck and jaw, almost as if the fatal current had been turned on.

‘Yes, Peter. In the Yangtze.’

‘Not recovered?’

‘No. I’m sorry to say.’

‘No matter. Since—’

‘He was a fine boy. We had him on our paper for a couple of years. He was always energetic and faithful, and everybody was fond of him. Can I do anything, Peter, old friend? Can I—got any brandy, whisky? I’ll send to the nearest drugstore.’

‘No. Thank you.’

‘Your daughter?’

‘Swann’s.’

‘I’ll go for her.’

‘Please don’t.’

‘May I—may I send my car?’

‘Thank you. Very kind. Is—is the news on the street?’

‘No, not till five o’clock.’

‘Don’t let your—your chauffeur tell her. Let her come to me.’

‘I’ll wait with you till she comes.’

No thought of his own connection with this tragedy evidently entered the head of William Bronze. He fancied himself only in the rôle of an old friend, doing a magnanimous thing, taking time worth hundreds by the hour and bestowing it upon an obscure and helpless and world-forgotten man, a boyhood friend. He felt good about it. Peter said:

‘Please telephone her to expect a car. And—tell her nothing has happened to her father. Absolutely nothing.’

When Bill Bronze returned from the telephone in the hall, after sending a message to Miss Weld—he thoughtfully refused to speak to her direct—he found Peter in the same posture as before. Apparently, he had not moved a muscle. Mr. Bronze said:

‘Now I’ll send the chauffeur and be right back to wait with you.’ He started for the door.

‘William—wait. If you don’t mind—will you go too—not to Penelope, but back to your office?’

‘Oh, my dear old friend. I can’t leave you here waiting. I—’

‘William. Sorry. Please. I hope you won’t mind, but—but—I want to be alone.’



Scarcely ten minutes from Swann’s brought Penny. Of course all sorts of suspicions and surmises began flooding her mind as soon as she received the message that Mr. Bronze’s car would come for her in a few moments. When she emerged from the store, she expected to see Richard’s roadster at the curb. No, the familiar limousine. Jane must have sent it. But why? Penny was to go home. Would Jane be waiting there? Why didn’t she come in her own coupé? What could this summons mean only half an hour before quitting time? Father is absolutely all right. They made that clear.

Meantime, Peter never moving sat in his chair. Why don’t tears come? The boy will never have to suffer as I suffer. But do I suffer as I ought? I’m calmer, much calmer, than I thought I could be at such a moment. What is it? Age? I

suffered so much more when his mother went. She was so young and beautiful, and I so much older. Mine, a late marriage. I cried when I lost her. I shall not cry now. I wonder why? David wept in sack-cloth till his son died, then he took off his sack-cloth and ashes and sat in his judgment seat. He said, 'He shall not come to me, but I shall go to him.' Maybe that's it, and I feel it cannot be long. Shall I go to him? The last of the Welds. He was the last. No, I'm the last. Penelope — my thought and care must be for her. She will suffer more than I do. She adored him. I think she loved him — no, not better than me; but he was young. I must soften this for Penelope. Poor child. Even if they found him they couldn't send him home. Better as it is. Is that callous in me? He will never have to suffer anything like this. But do I suffer so deeply after all? I wonder I can collect myself so well. Yes, it must be age and so near the end of the journey. There's the car. I will go to meet Penny now.

'Father, what is it? They said you were absolutely all right. You're not —'

'Come in, child. Sit down, please dear, while I tell you.'

'No. Standing! What is it — it's Chris! Is — no — no — no!'

'Yes, Penny. He is — gone on ahead!'

'I don't believe it! How do you know?' Penny spoke in a whisper.

'Yes. A. P. dispatch from China,' and he told her exactly all he knew. Much the best way to deal with Penny. I know that. It's like her to take it standing. She always will. Don't harden, Penny, oh, please God, don't let her harden — nor hate. 'Now Penny, I'm all you have in the world — a broken old staff, but you — everybody that knows you well will always — you'll always have friends, Penny.'

‘I’m not thinking about me! My God, Peter, I’m thinking about you. What can you do? How can you stand it?’

‘Somehow, I — I am standing it better than I’d have ever thought.’

‘But they can’t even find him? They must find him. I’ll go myself and find him.’

‘Just as well not, Penny. It would not be Chris if they found — it. No, not Chris, not his eyes, not his smile, not — no, better so, dear. They could only cremate him, to send home. Mother Earth will do it just as well — better. Sit down now, Penny. You’ve taken it as — as I knew you would. Here, Penny, this chair.’

He put his arms about her and urged her gently toward the big leather chair where he had just been sitting. She looked at him wonderingly in the dim light, and then she threw her arms round his neck, and began sobbing:

‘Oh, Peter, Peter! Think of yourself just this once. Sit down yourself. You — you make me mad at you, Peter!’ She pushed him into the chair, flung herself on her knees, clasped him round the waist, and buried her face in his lap. At last he wept — a little. When Penny had finally sobbed herself quiet, she sat back on her heels, held his hands and asked him the question which, of course, had clamored in both their minds.

‘Do you believe we’ll see him, some day, over yonder, I mean? Will you see him?’

‘I don’t know, Penny, I hope so.’

‘I used to believe it,’ she said.

‘Yes, we believe so much more when we’re young. We don’t know so well, as we grow older. I used to expect to see your mother — now, somehow you are your mother. Still I hope to see her, if there’s a God — and of course there is.’

‘Why do you say of course?’

‘Because one can’t think of the beautiful order there is here, the laws, the invariable movement, without a directing hand.’

‘Still that does not prove — immortality.’

‘No, nothing can prove it, like a theorem in geometry. But it’s more than likely, Penny. I don’t know. We may all go back into the sea of the infinite, become part of him.’

‘Most likely, I think, Peter. We create our immortality, all there is. Artistic creation. Creative living. Make beauty and you make immortality, whether in the arts, or — or in a home or a family, or a society. Nothing surviving except beauty and creators of beauty. Isn’t that the way of it? And Chris lived creatively. He — he was so beautiful. He —’ Penny broke down, while her father, his hand on her bowed head, talked on until twilight came.

Penelope heard voices at the steps to the porch. She recognized Jane’s and Richard’s. Then she heard a deep bass voice answering them:

‘Yes, Miss Bronze — and Mr. Bronze. My name’s Powers. Friend, you know. No, I haven’t been in the house. Just sitting here. I don’t know whether we should go in. Yes, I think — yes, you should go in, Miss Bronze.’

Hapwood Powers, having little else to do at the moment when the finals came out, had early read the news and come swiftly to the little cottage from his apartment room not far away. Jane Bronze who never saw the final but read only the home edition, had seen nothing about the death of Chris. It remained for Richard to tell her, after rushing home as fast as his car could come. He asked her whether they should go to Peter and Penelope, or which of them or both. Jane quickly decided for both. He would have walked, into the little home with her but for the quiet word of Hapwood

Powers, with the emphasis on the pronoun, 'I think you should go in, Miss Bronze.' Jane therefore entered alone. She paused a moment, let her eyes grow accustomed to the dusk, then walked to the pair, one sitting in the big chair, one huddled at his feet. She softly touched Penelope's shoulder, then Peter's, and said:

'Penny. Mr. Weld. This — this —'

'Jane,' Penny answered and reached up a hand to Jane's which rested on Penny's shoulder. Jane said:

'He was almost as much mine — in a way —'

'I know. I know,' Penny replied. 'Poor Jane, poor Chris.'

'No,' said Peter. 'He will never have to suffer as we are suffering.'

'He has suffered,' Jane said.

'Who's out there, Jane?' asked Penny.

'Richard and Mr. Powers.'

'Oh, Happy. Will you tell him to come in and sit a moment with Daddy? I want to talk a little with you, Jane. Then I'll see Richard.'

As Penny moved through the little hallway to the dining room, she came face to face with Hapwood Powers coming in. She took his hand and asked:

'How long have you been out there?'

'Only a little while, half-hour or so.'

'Why didn't you come in?'

'Oh, I — I just couldn't, you know — I —'

'Yes, I understand. Go in to Daddy. Come in here, Jane.'

In the dining room, the two leaned against the table, but did not sit down. Jane began: 'If only I'd gone with Chris, or gone to Chris, he — he would be living.'

'You can't help that, Jane.'

'I could have helped. That's what makes it all so — so bitter.' Jane apparently could not cry.

‘I don’t see how you could have done differently — being who you are, and the case — being what it is.’

‘I could. Oh, I could. I ought to have smashed everything and gone.’

‘That’s just it, it couldn’t be done. Or you couldn’t do it.’ If Jane should feel this utterance a reflection on her strength of character, Penny couldn’t help it. The thing had to be said. Jane replied:

‘He is no more lost to me than he was before. He was just the same as dead.’

‘But not to me — to us. No use to go over it all, though, Jane, is there?’

‘No — no use!’ Jane had stood with her arm about Penny’s waist; now suddenly she threw both arms round Penny’s neck, bowed her head on Penny’s shoulder and burst into weeping and sobs. Penny found herself in the position of comforter to the proud girl, and looked a little downward at the blue-black hair with a detachment of observation that sometimes comes to us all in our most tragic moments. She patted and petted Jane and tried to soothe her, even though a certain reproach struggled with the pity, in her heart. Jane’s fault; but she couldn’t help it. We all do in this world pretty much what we have to, Peter says. Any one of us, in another’s shoes, would do about as that other. Endocrine glands, all that. Tied up with the System, things as they are. In a free society Chris and Jane would have got together, made for each other as they were. Things are just all wrong. Jane’s fault. She couldn’t help it, though.

At last Jane insisted upon getting tea, just tea and toast for Peter and Penny. ‘That’s all I know how to cook. I can do that.’

‘Neither of us could swallow it. Still, I’ll see if I can’t get Daddy to take something.’

Just something to do. Not to stand talking, or unable to talk. Both young women had ceased their low, controlled crying, and both went about making tea in the kitchen. They prepared for five.

* * *

Richard stood on the porch for a long time. He felt excluded. He didn't know what right this man Powers had to be in there with Peter Weld. He, Richard, had been as close to the old scholar as another; he had talked with Peter, how many afternoons in the past five years? He had got his ideas of social reform from Peter Weld, or at least had got them set and fixed. He had heard the Welds talk about Powers; but never supposed the Communist an intimate of the family; besides, this Powers had been away so long. Now he comes back and takes charge. Well, I've no right to. I feel in a way responsible for this trouble. I ought not to. Dad's responsible if anybody is, maybe Jane is, a little, yes much; but surely I'm not. Maybe Penny links all the Bronzes in one lot. She does. Think how she drove me out that Christmas day and told me she hated me. Yet there she is in there with Jane doing something in the kitchen. I'm going in to Mr. Weld. But Dick did not. Something kept him. He walked back and forth on the little porch. He sat down in a chair, got up and moved to the porch-swing, then back to the top step and sat down on it, then got up again and moved softly about.

It seemed to him hours before Penny came out to him and said:

‘Come in, Dick, and have tea.’

‘Oh, Penny! I — I'm so sorry for you — and your father.’

‘Of course, Dick, I know. Thank you. Now come in.’

He took her hand, made no motion to enter the door, just

gripped her hand in both of his, looked into her eyes, and held her in her place just outside the threshold. At last he blurted:

‘I suppose — you feel the Bronzes — somehow — in a way — responsible; but Penny, don’t be unfair. I — you know I always sympathized with Jane and Chris. I — I don’t want to be a cad — disloyal, don’t you know, to my Dad; but I did not approve his stand. You know it.’

‘Yes, Dick. I know. You’re a dear boy. But —’

‘Penny, for God’s sake! But what?’

‘But you’re not a free agent. You’re tied up. Nothing but dynamite can blast you loose from the System you belong to. Men don’t give up such things voluntarily. You can’t. If revolution ever comes, and it may, I’m going to join it, fight under the red flag. Die fighting the iniquitous reign of the Bronze Fifty-three. Chris died first. I’m ready next. Soon as — soon as Peter is asleep.’

‘You going to turn Communist, Penny? That what you mean?’

‘Don’t know what I mean. I’m in a revolt against the kind of men who killed Chris. I worshipped Chris. Your System exiled him and then killed him. I’m going to fight back, any weak way I can. I give you fair warning. You’re in the System. You’re a chip of the old block! You’re going the way of your Dad. You can’t help it. Your fault, Jane’s fault, but you can’t help it. We all do what we have to. All right, I have to fight.’

‘Penny, I swear to you, I’m not going to stay in the System, as you call it, and as it is. I’m going to smash loose. Honest to God, when my time comes. When I — when I take control. You wait and see.’

‘I’ll see, Dick, I’ll be watching. Now do come in to tea. Daddy will want to see you.’

‘Of course; but Penny —’

‘Come in, Dick, do, please.’

She prevailed, and they entered the library where one shaded lamp now burned on the table beside Peter’s big chair. There Peter sat, calm as usual, not talking. Happy Powers sat near him, on the edge of a chair, forearms on knees, big hands clasped and drooping, not awkward though evidently tense, strung up, like some big animal, waiting to spring on an enemy, eager to spring. When Dick entered beside the now collected and apparently cool Penelope, Powers glanced up once at the man and his eyes flashed black, then he looked down at the rug again. Not time to spring yet, big panther, black bear, red-mouthing tiger, nor all your packs of wolves, hyenas and jackals. Bide your time. Stalk your quarry. Await the day and exact instant. Patience. Ah, yes, I’ll be patient, growled Happy Powers inside of him and without a sound. I’ll wait, but this System, this thing that killed young Chris — Happy had only guessed, but shrewdly guessed, by a word here and there from Jane and Penny which he couldn’t help overhearing — this thing that killed his classmate and Penny’s brother, he’d hit it if ever he could, hit it like a catapult with his whole body, land his feet in its chest. He would, by God he would.

None of them could sip tea and eat toast. Penny tried, Jane tried, Dick tried, Powers refused. They all begged Peter to take a little tea. He did, then Penny followed his lead. Just a little tea, they must; and a few bites of toast, they must force it down. There was the night before them, the long night. There would be many persons coming, as soon as the papers and the telephones told all of Penny’s friends, and Chris’s friends, yes, and Peter’s. One must have strength to meet all this strain of sympathy and love. There, they were beginning to come. Penny glanced instinctively at

Hapwood Powers. She didn't know why. Not at Jane, oh, no. Not at Dick, no. She leaned on Hapwood Powers, an ally, an enemy to the Fifty-three, an intellectual outlaw, rebel, a prepared leader for an hour of revolt. Powers arose, went quietly to the door, spoke softly to some one and returned to tell Penelope with equal softness and a natural and surprising grace that Dr. Ned Engren was at the door.

‘Oh, bring Ned to us, of course. Good old Ned,’ Penny said.

Ned came, subdued, almost whispering, put his arms about Penny and kissed her cheek, just like a brother, and went and knelt by Peter Weld. He said the soft, right things. A gentleman born, this breeze blowing by, now so soft and cool and refreshing. What did it know, or care, of the rumbling earthquake that might blow up the world, would make it look worse than Vimy Ridge or Messines, or the Valley of the Somme? He would be surprised when it came, like all the thousands and millions who had never been conscious of pressure from either side. He would suffer, would Dr. Ned Engren, pinched and prodded by pressures he could not trace but tremendously could feel, fees uncollectable, practice dropping off, patients postponing operations necessary to save health and life, the earth trembling and rocking, and Dr. Ned so kindly and so bewildered. What did he know of the Fifty-three on one side or the fifty-three million unemployed or in danger of disaster, on the other? All very astonishing when it should come, this war of the Hamiltonians and the masses. Just now, ‘I'm so sorry for you, Penny, darling.’

As others came, Dick and Jane felt that they could no longer with propriety stay. Powers, however, remained at the door, bowed everybody in and out. It just happened that way. Penelope wondered at the situation once or twice, then

stopped wondering, stopped caring what assumption her closest friends might make. No, she didn't care, couldn't care. First came the friends of Christopher Weld, old time friends of the staff, then Penny's girl friends, store friends, school friends, boy and girl friends, with a sprinkling of Peter's young men who had sat round him at the clubs and listened to his talk. Then, as the evening wore late, these lessened in numbers, and strangers to Penelope came, genteel, and then shabby strangers, even derelicts, with rents in garments or in crowns of hats, Peter's friends, a part of Peter's hosts of friends. Even Penelope felt astonishment that Peter should know so many of the very poor, and that so many of the very poor should love Peter. Suddenly she recalled what she had heard him say one night long ago: 'When a man's funeral takes place, you can know what value he has been to the world, by the numbers of the poor who come to attend it and show their respect and regard for him.'

As midnight drew on the visitors grew less and less frequent, and there was time between calls for Penny to make observation of the quiet big fellow who stood in the little hall. Two or three times she said to him:

'You can go now, Happy. You've been so good. You should have had a dinner tonight. And you must be very tired.'

'Neither hungry nor tired, Miss Weld. I know what hunger is; and just now, no symptoms. I know what fatigue is, and not a bit of it tonight. I'll stay till you and Mr. Weld go to bed and to sleep.'

'I doubt if I get Peter to bed tonight. He's a night hawk, you know. Maybe I can make him lie down on the divan after a while.'

'Then you can go to bed, Miss Weld, if he goes to sleep.'

‘No, I don’t think so, Happy. Why don’t you say “Penny”? I couldn’t go to bed and leave him.’

A flush went all over his swarthy cheeks and neck when she hastily shot at him the question, ‘Why don’t you say Penny?’ Pleasure, of course. The first bit of pleasure he’d felt all through the long bitter evening. All the rest, duty, just a part of the day’s work, obligation to comrades, incident of the battle. But ‘Why don’t you say Penny?’ Whether she meant little or much, or whether she just found the fact that she herself kept saying ‘Happy’ while he kept on with ‘Miss Weld’ embarrassing to herself, he did not know; but her saying that meant much to him. An acknowledgment of a certain intimacy. He had the reward of his labors as chamberlain-in-chief, major-domo, whatever you call it; doorman if you will, butler, I’d do anything for such compensation and all unexpected. He merely said:

‘I’ll stick around.’

Peter did lie down and sleep. Penny curled up in the big leather chair and slept; and when in the gray dawn she stirred and went to the front window to look out, there sat Hapwood Powers on the top step of the porch.



Penny scrambled the eggs for breakfast. She had that much confidence in them, since they came from Peter’s own little poultry yard in the back garden. Peter loved and trusted his hens; and they trusted, if they did not love him. They would have loved, given the capacity; and maybe they did at least when he approached with the feed-bag. At all events, every egg would stand straight up in a tumbler of salt-water, so they could safely be scrambled. She used half-a-dozen, did Penny; and since she and Peter only nibbled at

their breakfast, she estimated that Happy took care of four and a half eggs, seven strips of bacon, six pieces of buttered toast, and three cups of coffee, and brought the first smile to her face since five o'clock the previous afternoon. If the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, the way to a woman's is through a man's valiancy of stomach.

Nobody said much until the bacon and egg platter stood clean. Then Peter Weld observed:

‘I suppose you will not be going to work today, Penny, or will you?’

‘Of course not, Daddy.’

‘I don't know. Seems to me, sometimes, best just to go ahead.’

‘I agree with you ordinarily; but this is different. A shock, you know. I'm sure I couldn't go ahead.’

‘Of course not. I think, though, by night I can go ahead with the piece for “The Radical.”’

‘Why should you, Peter Weld?’

‘It ought to have gone off today. Tomorrow will have to do.’

‘Maybe the best thing for you.’

‘Yes, I think so. This way we have of making so much of death — the Greeks were wiser. They wore white and flowers. Grieving perhaps, yes, grieving that they might not go, too, with the voyagers who put out on blue summer seas for happy islands, but not grieving as we grieve, hopelessly, helplessly, despairingly. I'm glad Chris is not to have a funeral — an American funeral. They're barbarous. Black, to scare away devils!’

‘Right, Peter,’ said Penny.

‘Absolutely,’ said Hapwood Powers.

‘We can't grieve for Chris. Maeterlinck is right. Whatever is beyond, we may be sure is better than what is here.

We are grieving for ourselves. That's justified. Nobody to carry on the name. After all, that's pride, a really selfish pride. Why carry on a name? What's the odds? A name's a word. Words come and go, and so families, and whole nations. What's one little name? Let it go.'

'Still, you'd have liked to see Chris live, and you'd have liked to see his children, Peter, dear.'

'Yes. His children. I — I don't know that he'd have had any. He couldn't have the wife he wanted, and he might not have had a wife at all.'

'Damn the rotten System!' an impulsive bass growl startled both the Welds. 'Pardon. I was thinking too much out loud. Capitalism killed this boy. I'd kill capitalism.'

'Yes, or ameliorate its abuses,' said Peter Weld.

'Ameliorate! A mealy-mouthed word! Kill it, root it out. Put fraternity in its place. Let people love and mate as they desire, and not according to class.'

'Not by violence, my dear boy. By education, thought, slow gradations, the ballot and the congress.'

'We've been trying these slow measures too long, Mr. Weld. They'll never work. Education? Where do we get by it? How intelligent is our American education? Grinding 'em out in our school-hoppers, all alike, cut by pattern; shoved through our colleges as through a turning lathe, smooth, machine-made, standardized. I had four years in the top-notch university of the land, Harvard. They're all alike. They give capitalistic education. They stand for things as they are. The *status quo*.'

'There are some rebels at Harvard.' Peter spoke quietly.

'Yes. And the authorities are after their scalps.'

'Can't get 'em.'

'Thank God! One place on the continent where the Fifty-three can't reach a man. But what is a drop in the bucket

like that? We can never reshape a society with just a few straight-thinking men, patient, non-violent men.'

'Yes, you can. It always has been so. The few do the revolutionary thinking and work.' Peter kindled a little as he spoke.

'Not with words.'

'How about Karl Marx?'

'Yes, but he stirred up a bunch of hornets, who did something else but talk. Lenin, Trotsky — they were men of action. We've got to act, and not simply talk.'

'Talk precedes action. We'll act, when the time comes, and the mass is educated. The Fifty-three can't forever keep the masses down.'

'No, by God. Pardon, Penny.'

'But, my boy, my conviction is deep and unshakable that the American people, by genius, by nature, by inheritance, whatever you please to call it, acts through ordered channels, the vote, the popular assembly, the parliament. If we ever have a bloody revolution here, it will come through an entire lack of leadership we've always found. If politicians and statesmen go utterly mad, then a red rebellion may break loose, but not otherwise.'

'Politicians!' a growl mixed with a sneer from Happy Powers.

'Don't make the mistake of belittling a great calling because some men dishonor it. The art of politics in a democracy tempts the highest talent. To take prejudiced public opinion, and by wise and careful words change it without offending it — ah, that calls for the highest self-restraint, tact, skill, relentless leadership. To take half-a-loaf rather than no bread, to inch along, inch along, through years of patient pressing toward an end. That calls for manhood, and high art. A civilized man asks concerning a measure whether it

makes towards where he wants to go, even if only a little way at a time. Public opinion and the art of swaying it — that is the arena of politics. Public opinion, a mulish, bullish thing —'

‘Yes, and always wrong. *Vox populi, Vox dei* — poppycock. Got to take ‘em by the scruff of the neck and make ‘em go where their feed is.’

‘You can’t take a stampeding herd by the scruff of the neck. There’s where your true politician comes in. He puts something out ahead to divert them. If he can’t do it, he then gallops round another way, waves a different flag, sets up another scare, a counter-scare. When they do turn, they turn like a whirlwind. The politician plays with avalanches. Maybe all his life, public opinion will not fall the way he wants it to. Maybe he’s fortunate enough to make it, now and again. Then he rides on it. People call him lucky. He is a great doer of things. He’s played a big game, for a big stake. Biggest game there is. If I were young, I’d be a politician. This country cries out just now for leaders.’

‘It doesn’t want leaders. It wants a bash on the head! Capitalism wants a bash on the head. Knock it out.’

‘No, no, my boy. It wants a ring in the nose. Lead it, don’t bat it on the chin. You could do it, by the way. You could make a leader out of yourself.’

‘That’s what I’m trying to do, in a small way, trying to lead a revolt, kindle a small fire here or there. I came here because I learned there was trouble in the Bronze mill. And I wanted to promote it. It’s piddling work, I know.’

‘Why don’t you do big work?’ asked Peter. It seemed they were all glad to find ordinary, everyday affairs they could talk about, not connected with their tragedy.

‘Yes, you could,’ Penny added just the three words, but the direct look out of those large eyes — what color are they?

Brown, no, gray? No, not that. Blue, that's what they are, of course. Kind o' puzzling, though. And what made her say that in such a positive way? What did she know about it? Big Hapwood Powers found himself staring at her in a way that he knew was bad form, but he stared on, until she looked down and in embarrassment fumbled with her napkin. Then he turned to Peter Weld and asked:

‘What work?’

‘I'd go into law and politics. The two go together in this country.’

‘And be a Democrat or a Republican?’

‘Neither. Belong to a minority party.’

‘Communist party? Fat chance a Communist has in this country.’

‘Why not Socialist? After all, it's a thing of degrees, and of methods. A Communist is an extreme Socialist, and a Socialist is a conservative Communist. A Communist wants revolution by force; a Socialist still believes in parliamentary procedure, peaceful methods. They're both seeking the same end, which is government interference with capitalistic control of the whole of America, industry and commerce, lock, stock, and barrel. Then when you find a man or a party in the mood to further your ends, go along with him or it, plump for him or it, work your head off for him or it. He and it will both come along some day.’

‘I've felt the futility of what I am trying to do, felt it for some time. Maybe that's a way out, or a way in. You can bore from within, can't you? That's a favorite phrase of Lenin and the rest, isn't it? But I'm all afire with this thing.’

Peter Weld had now suddenly lapsed into a certain detachment of look, eyes misty and far away. Was he seeing the Yangtze River, and a plane tail-spinning downward into it?

Or was he looking into the blank decade, if he should have that much, ahead of him? Happy saw the abstraction, and ceased talking of himself, feeling that he had been obtuse. Penny at once put in:

‘No, it’s good for him.’ How could she tell so quickly what was passing in Happy’s mind? Startling at first, then not so startling; why, anybody could tell what Happy would be thinking about like that, from the set of circumstances. Still she could certainly penetrate, that girl. I’ve never met anyone just like her. So gay she could be. But so grave. Anyway—no, it won’t do to go on thinking in that strain. Wouldn’t be fair to her. You’re not her kind of man, Happy, you ought to know that. She’d want a lot of things that your life could never supply, gaiety, dancing, cars, and cards. You’d be an old stick-in-the-mud for such a girl. She—why, young Bronze—yes, he must be her man. That explains the disturbed and nervous condition of that dapper boy out there on the porch last night. Happy had seen it. A Bronze and a Weld after all, despite this other tragic mix-up? Could Penny stand for it? Women stand for a good deal to get what they want. Would she take him over—over her brother’s watery grave? The situation suddenly became clear to Happy in much less time than it takes to tell, so quick is the human mind. Happy Powers, you’d better keep out.



Peter Weld loved autumn, particularly the last days of October, and the Indian Summer of early November, beyond any season of his year. He spent most of his daylight hours out-of-doors. In the morning he fiddled with vines and shrubs, chickens and vegetable garden, clearing out the wreckage of the past season and preparing for the planting

of the coming one. Toward noon he would take a street car to the Club for luncheon, talk for an hour afterward with any young men who had the leisure to listen, and sometimes walk back home in the middle of the afternoon to books and an open fire of wood.

The debate with Hapwood Powers never came off in public, because the younger man refused to take advantage of the blow that had fallen upon his intended antagonist. Peter pooh-poohed this consideration, and declared himself quite fit and ready for the arena; he even taunted Happy with fear of his good biting falchion; but Happy remained unmoved and immovable. Truth to tell, Peter showed his loss. His face lost something of its roundness, his cheeks something of their color. Although no word of grief and rebellion escaped his lips, he fell often into a brown study, his eyes less often seemed to focus on anything in space. Penny would watch him from the doorway to the library or to his den, unobserved, and a sob would rise in her throat which she had to choke back. When he became aware of her he would smile, put on a bright look, and begin cheerfully to talk.

Hapwood debated often enough with him in private. All through that summer and fall, Happy spent much of his daytime at the cottage. Never evenings when Penelope would be home from Swann's. Peter took infinite pains to undermine the extreme views of the younger man, patiently to replace destructive impulses with constructive ones, to instill regard for ordered procedure in reform, and patience for the slower and safer methods. At times he felt he made some progress in taming the violence of the agitator, at others he nearly gave up in despair. Sure that nothing less than a miracle could convert a Communist, he nevertheless had seen too many miracles take place in human minds to be willing

to give over utterly the attempt. Furthermore, he felt persistently that this youth did not clang brazenly, but with an undertone of hesitation; that he was really not half so sure as he seemed; that a fight went on inside of him; he was like an ox kicking against the goad. Peter held on, therefore — smiling at the change of figure in his thought — to the slenderest toe-hold on the glacier-side of this cool big mind of Hapwood's and pecked away patiently with his ice-axe to gain surer footing.

Penelope meantime had no light on the avoidance of herself which Hapwood, all unaware, revealed to her. He never accepted an invitation from Peter Weld to remain for dinner, nor came near the house on Saturday afternoons or Sundays. He always gave as excuse that he had work to do, reading, study, speaking at meetings, or throwing wrenches into the machinery of mills. Penelope never uttered to her father the queries, and she was rather astonished to find the irritations, which came flooding her mind and heart at Happy's conduct. He takes himself too seriously, the conceited big ass will not stoop to converse with a mere woman. He, perhaps, has sickened of womankind, grown disillusioned, cynical. Very well, if one unhappy experience can turn him upside down, he's not such a heavyweight as he appears. I'm sure I can't or shan't turn huntress like Diana and go out after him with bow and spear.

Richard Bronze, now, was quite a different proposition. He came when not wanted. He had a toughness of fiber that nothing could break. He refused to link himself with his father. He denounced his father and his conduct about Chris in no uncertain terms, and his father's business methods and gains, with equal honesty of conviction. He swore by all the gods that some day he would take control of all his father's enterprises and interests, and find a way to adminis-

ter them for the public good. He would reform all that. He would need Penny to help him.

She rode with him on crisp mild October nights. She watched Peter narrowly to see if flashes of pain would come into eyes and lips—lips which reveal more of human feeling than any other human feature—when Richard's roadster drew up at the house, or Richard's voice sounded in Peter's presence. She could never detect any symptom in the benign face. She really believed, and with good ground, that Peter harbored no resentment even against Bill Bronze, let alone against his innocent son. Gradually Penny's own prejudice wore away under the persistent and gentle dropping of Richard's tenderness 'upon the place beneath.'

One russet and yellow autumn day had darkened into night, Penny and Richard had sat through half of a picture at the Rex, and had taken the country road out to that same hedge and elm where Penny had danced so recklessly five years ago, and sat in the starlight where then they had looked at the moon. Richard began:

'Want to dance, Penny?'

'No, thank you. Have to have moonlight.'

'And—youth?'

'You talk as if I'd become an old woman!'

'Youth slips away, Penny, dear. It is slipping for us.'

'I'll show you I can dance just as strongly as ever—'

'I don't mean that, you know very well. I mean we're wasting the good years. We've already wasted a lot.'

'I don't think I have. I've been living—living and learning.'

'You know very well what I mean. We could have been living together.'

'Dick, don't begin that—'

‘I’m not beginning it. I began it years ago—let me see, eight, to be exact. Now I want to finish it. Surely now’s the time for us to marry. I’m asking you again.’

‘Something tells me no. You should marry somebody who is ready. I love my job.’

‘Who ever heard of a woman refusing to marry on account of a job?’

‘Many more do today than ever before. I’m one.’

‘I can pay you twice as much—’

‘Yes. There you go! I suppose you’ll say next, who ever heard of a woman refusing to marry a man because he has too much money? Well, they have done it. And I’m one.’

‘Is that all you’ve got against me?’

‘Wrong kind of money maybe, and a screw loose in you somewhere or you wouldn’t have it.’

‘I’ll chuck it, if you say, and we’ll start out together in a flivver and hunt jobs.’

‘I’ve already got one. I really believe I could earn more than you, if you were cut loose from your Dad.’

‘Penny! That’s not altogether fair.’

‘Well, I think it’s true. I’ll stick to it.’

‘You can’t know. I can’t know. But I’m willing to try—to chuck my chances with Dad and go out on my own if you’ll go with me.’

‘I don’t have to go anywhere to look for a job, I tell you. I’ve got one. Let’s see you get out and get one.’

‘You really would advise that? Do you think I could do more for the world and humanity if I gave up my chances to—to—reshape things? And what are you doing more than I am to serve humanity?’

‘Honest business is serving humanity. I design and buy

pretty things for beauty-loving and sometimes beauty-starved women, that's something.'

'Well, I'm — never mind. We won't argue; but I intend, when my time comes, to show you what I can do.'

'I'll wait to be shown. Richard, you are always going to do something. You are not doing and have not done anything yet. You're an alloy of copper and tin, that's what bronze is. Ever look it up in your dictionary? Tin a hard and brittle metal, copper a malleable and ductile one, that shimmers, red and beautiful. You've got some tough and unyielding qualities like your father, inside of you, and I wonder if they're not prevailingly selfish qualities; but you have also some pliable and beautiful ones that shimmer. You're an alloy. No mistake.'



By mid-winter the conversion of Hapwood Powers had gone far. Nothing sudden about it, but a gradual undermining of convictions that seemed unalterable by something he had never met before in his short and stormy life, sympathy and patient understanding. Peter Weld saw all the abuses and injustices against which Hapwood rebelled as clearly as himself and deplored them, but Peter showed the younger man the wisdom of the long forward look, and the Fabian type of warfare.

The snow came down heavily in a January storm. Peter had not gone out that day for lunch at the University Club, but had taken a 'snack' in his own little kitchen, snug and cozy. Happy came about three and delighted the old gentleman. He had missed that day his contact with the young men.

'Mr. Weld,' announced Happy, when tobacco had well begun burning, 'I'm going into a law firm.'

Peter Weld knew what that meant. Hapwood had decided at last for the orderly procedure instead of the violent one. He said:

‘Good. I’m glad. You can then be ready to jump in whenever an opening comes. And meantime you can see justice rendered many times, when it would miscarry without you.’

‘Like Clarence Darrow?’

‘Yes, I think Darrow’s life has counted. He’s attracted public attention, mostly for his criminal defense cases. Always defended, never prosecuted. A fatalist complete, he has believed we’re all under compulsion, couldn’t act differently, not responsible. But in national matters, social and international, he’s generally found on the right side. A bit too much of an isolationist to suit me, but that’s the pressure of misguided mass opinion on a mind even as independent as his. He’s nearly a Communist, my friend. I think you can make a career resembling his and help on the cause of social justice.’

‘I’ll try it a while and see if you’re right. I’ll get into whatever reform movements go on in local politics. They don’t amount to much, always flash in the pan, but they’ll serve as training camps to keep in condition and keep my hand in.’

‘Fine. I have known a man here and there who has had a fine effect on a city covering a long period of years; but I don’t believe your efforts will need to confine themselves to our own horizon for long. Things are moving now toward a change, a big change, a nation-wide change, unless I’m entirely mistaken in the drift.’

‘I have a chance to go in with a firm, an old firm, one a Jew, and all three others considered radical men, though of course they seem conservative to me. I’m going to take it. Evans, Collar, Liggett, and Goldberg.’

‘Good firm. Good men. I congratulate you — and them.’
‘Of course I’m not a partner, but an employe.’
‘You’ll be a partner.’

They discussed for an hour or more Hapwood’s venture and his prospects, Peter Weld, of course, taking as absorbed an interest as if they were his own concerns. Suddenly Happy glanced at a big silver wrist-watch, held on by a leather strap, walked to the window and looked out, then turned back to the blazing logs and looked down on Peter Weld. He hesitated and coughed and finally said:

‘She’s not prepared for this storm, is she?’

‘Who? Penny? No. It was fair this morning when she went away; but I suppose she can borrow galoshes at the store.’

‘Hadn’t I — ah — better go after her?’

‘It would be very considerate, my boy. She’d appreciate it, but — it’s a lot of trouble, and Penny’s good at taking care of herself.’

‘I’ll go just the same. Will you be good enough to ’phone her, Mr. Weld? Tell her I’ll be out in front at five o’clock with a taxi.’

When Hapwood drew up at the curb in front of Swann’s just at the hour, he saw Penelope in the sheltered doorway. She beckoned to him, and he dashed through the driving snow to her side.

‘I’m so sorry you had all this trouble, Happy. Richard Bronze had just called me before Father did. I tried to get Dick to stop him; but he’d gone, evidently after his car. Oh, dear, what a mix-up. I’d — I’d rather have gone with you, Happy, honestly I would.’

Even as she spoke, the roadster, shining through the blinding snow, heavily curtained against the storm, drew and skidded up to the curb in front of Happy’s taxi, and Richard

sprang out to meet Penelope as she came forward, waving her hand over her shoulder in a hasty salute to Hapwood Powers. Happy paid off his cab. He thought himself indifferent, and yet he felt terribly disturbed. Hurt pride, he supposed, nothing more. As he walked away toward a restaurant for a lonely dinner, however, something lightened his mood. He could not at first tell what, until words kept repeating themselves to his disbelief; and an honest, annoyed look in eyes that he did not believe could lie or dissemble came to his remembrance, 'I'd rather have gone with you, Happy, honestly I would.' Just how far did she mean those words? Undoubtedly she meant them for the moment. Just a temporary thing or—no, too much to hope that she meant them for all the time.

Big Bill

More than a decade since the publisher of the *Sentinel* and the boss of *Seminole* strode in so confidently the night of Harding's election to his office adjoining the big city room. A dozen years, however, had made little difference to the outward seeming of Big Bill; only a closer scrutiny revealed the heavy lines in the face, the drawn look about the mouth, the thinning of the lips, until that full Cupid's bow had now become a straight line.

'A friend of mine told me the other day that he had had so many women, first and last, that he can't remember all their names,' said William Bronze one time to Peter Weld, the only man in whom he ever reposed deep confidence. 'But not me! I promised God some years ago that I wouldn't do that any more.'

'God or Mother Nature?' quizzically asked Peter Weld.

'Why God, of course, just as I said. I don't believe in violating social laws. All such things waste time, rob us of efficiency, fritter away our energies. Now I can spot any man in my employ who is carrying on an affair with a woman. They have a fishy look out of the eye; they come in late to work, with dark circles under their eyes.'

'Not unless they drink heavily, Bill?'

'Yes. Whether they drink or not.'

'If you were young enough, I think an affair—not too serious—would brighten you up, Bill,' Peter grinned.

'You astonish me, Peter. I thought you a moral man.'

'What is morality? Chastity?'

‘Surely, monogamy. The one man and the one woman.’

‘Not in Arabia, not in ancient Israel, modern India, China. Morality in benighted China means honesty in business, fairness in trade, integrity in all human relations. That is one jump ahead of chaste America. I look upon chastity as one small twig of the great tree of morality. You damage that twig and the tree bleeds, to be sure, but does not die; but if you girdle that tree with piracy in business, the whole beautiful thing shrivels. Bill, thou art the man! ’

‘You get the queerest ideas, you old nut. Now what is more filthy, degrading to the whole moral fiber of a man than mixing up illegitimately with a woman? What saps a man’s strength more, makes him more sheepish and afraid to look the world in the face?’

‘Stealing.’

‘What did you say? What do you mean?’

‘I say stealing makes a man more sheepish.’

‘Who’s talking about thieves?’

‘I am, whether you are or not.’

‘It goes without saying that thieves are sheepish, cowards, afraid; but I’m talking of gentlemen.’

‘So am I. Gentlemen thieves who take too big dividends, pay too small wages.’

‘Oh, there you go on your millennial theories, your — your Communism. Can’t you fix your mind on one subject at a time without running off on your favorite tangent? I was talking about chastity.’

‘Yes. Your mind runs on that too. You know, Bill, I’ve heard that as fast as you reform, are forced to reform in one line, you become a crusader. You had to give up highballs, you became a prohibitionist. Tobacco, you joined the anti-cigarette league. Golf, you began to condemn it in all other

men. Now it's women. Bill, can you remember your first time with a woman?'

'Gosh, no. I can't remember the last one.'

Mr. Bronze smiled. He seldom laughed any more; indeed, he had seldom laughed aloud, a big hearty laugh, in all his life; he was always thinking about something three paces ahead of the immediate topic of conversation. Suddenly, feeling that Peter would not take seriously this matter which, in fact, he talked about mainly to ease the tension of his nerves, he introduced the subject upon which he had sent for Peter.

'You know, Peter, I'm ready for a dictatorship. I don't see any other way out.'

Peter Weld did not look astonished. He had heard how Bill Bronze had fought the storm, gallantly, head up, since that October day when the crash came and paper-values had come tumbling, fortunes crumbled into heaps of yellow ash. Bill had stood—he could not sit still—and walked about that great office, the center of a shower of telegrams from New York, the stock-ticker clicking its head off in the corner by the window. Those who had seen him reported that he resembled a sea-captain on the bridge of his vessel in the middle of a typhoon, tense and rigid at times, at others leaping from one point of vantage to another. He had tried all known expedients to save his rocking ship. He had bought here, sold there, desperately heaving ballast overboard on one side and stacking up cargo on the other to shift at the proper moment. Never more admirable, Big Bill, than in a moment of danger, never more magnificent. The stern mouth never relaxed. In those days the last of the Cupid's bow disappeared and the straight, thin slit took its place. Messages came and went to the offices of the mills, the mines, the oil-wells, as from the flagship to the

other vessels of a fleet in battle. Shot after shot tore through the rigging and even pierced the plates fore, aft and amidships; but night and day, the commander never left the bridge.

In the two or three years that had elapsed since that first stormy day, Mr. Bronze, as well as the Fifty-three other admirals, had twisted and squirmed, tried all possible shifts, but could scarcely keep afloat. Some had shot themselves—not the admirals, but the petty officers—had pitched themselves out of twelfth story windows head first to the concrete below. All had passed many dividends, all had laid off workmen in shoals, all had raked out fire-boxes and emptied boilers and left smokeless chimney pathetic against the sky. Millionaires and multimillionaires had deflated like punctured balloons. Bill Bronze told Peter Weld that he knew intimately at least a hundred ‘multies’—‘I don’t mean to boast,’ he added modestly, and Peter couldn’t see the boasting—and ninety of them were eating their mattresses. He declared that he, himself, though not stripped, still only comfortable, could not cash in for one-half, or one-third of what until that fateful October he had estimated himself worth.

‘And I can’t see the way out. That’s the worst of it. I’ve always known what to do. Now I’m bewildered, don’t know what the devil’s got into us’—that’s the nearest Bill Bronze ever came to swearing, except maybe an occasional damn—‘and I can’t learn of anybody who knows any more than I do.’

‘Then why did you send for me? How could I know the way out?’

‘Just to let off steam to you. I know you claim to know a lot, but I don’t believe you know hardly anything. To be frank, how could you? You never handled any big things.’

‘No. I’ve done more thinking than handling. I’m purely theoretical.’

‘I know. And millennial thinking at that. I believe we need a Mussolini. I’m for American fascism. What do you think?’

‘Well, my hind sight’s pretty good. I think we sowed the seeds of this crop of depression back in 1920. And I told one or two friends, your son among them, that the crop of thistles was coming.’

‘My son, Dick? How come? Oh, over at the University Club where I’m told your post-luncheon seminars have become a feature? I’ve intended for some time to send a reporter over and cover one.’

‘No. At my home. Richard and I have had some long confabs there. He’s a discerning young man, above the average.’

‘Above the average!’ Bill almost snorted, but his innate suavity saved him. ‘You really think so?’

‘Oh yes, distinctly. You helped sow the seeds by backing Harding, espousing isolation, and trying to collect war-debts that could not be transferred.’

‘They’re able to pay.’

‘I didn’t say, pay. I said transfer. That’s where the trouble lies. The transfer must finally be made in gold or goods. Gold would damage us more than help. Goods we don’t want. There’s the thing in a nutshell. It’s not so simple as lending a neighbor a dollar and expecting him to pay back. We say, “They hired the money, didn’t they? Now let ‘em pay.” That’s presidential language, Vermont presidential language. No, they didn’t hire the money. They hired horses, beef on the hoof and in the can, steel, copper, tin. They hired goods. They must pay back in goods. That’s the only way the huge values can be trans-

ferred. But we don't want their goods, and shut it out with tariff walls. We've balled up the currencies of the world by dragging half the gold of the world over here when it ought to be evenly scattered over the earth like fertilizer over a field. Put it all in one place, it burns up the soil. But that's another question, the money question. A big one, too.'

'Do you know anything about it?' Bill tried to tantalize his old friend.

'Not from handling it. Only from studying and thinking about it.'

'Well, our government borrowed the money from our people to buy these goods for the Allies. The people will have to be paid or pay themselves, tax themselves.'

'Yes, which is better? To tax ourselves a little—it will take only a small fraction of the income tax to retire the bonds—and get currencies all over the world stabilized, trade going, industry smoking, and everybody's salaries and wages up, or keep on nagging for payment of debts and going deeper into depression? I'll take the tax and the chance of selling my writings to better advantage. More than any other one thing—I don't say it's the only thing—these debts have caused the depression.'

Bill Bronze looked at Peter indulgently, but did not know how to answer him.

'I always pay my debts,' he spoke stubbornly. 'And we paid ours after the civil war and after building our railroads.'

'Yes, in goods. Only about eight of our states defaulted on European debts.'

'No use raking up old scores. Now don't say history repeats.'

'No, I'm not saying anything. Words will not influence you. Only hard knocks. I give it up.'

‘ You’d better. Meantime, what do you think of a dictator? Let’s pay attention to home affairs, and let the rest of the world shift for itself.’

‘ It can’t be done. The world’s too little, and we’re too big. The interest of one is the interest of all. There can’t be bankruptcy in Berlin without repercussions over here, bank failures. There can’t be idle cotton mills anywhere in the world without our cotton-planters suffering. There can’t be changes in women’s styles, disregarded runs in silk hose under long American skirts, without depression in the silk industry of Japan. We must create good times everywhere we can in order to enjoy good times at home.’

‘ Yes, I suppose, the golden rule, and the golden age, among rival packs of wolves.’

‘ I haven’t found men wolves.’

‘ You see men only at their best, fed and rested, chewing the cud. I see them in the raw — blood raw — and I have to go after them blood-raw, with a meat-axe. That’s the only way to handle them.’

‘ Well, you and your meat-axe butchers have rather made a mess of it, a shambles, you’ll admit that?’

‘ Just find a dictator, that’s what we’ve got to do! ’

‘ All right, find him. I like the idea myself.’

* *

‘ But what about our own country? I’m sick and tired of all this talk about foreign countries.’ Bill Bronze’s tone rang much more soft and mellow than his words. ‘ I am rather partial to my own, my native land. Haven’t you any prescription for her?’

‘ Yes, I’d have your dictator eliminate all this cut-throat competition, resulting in over-production, or under-consump-

tion, same thing. I'd have industry unified, railroads co-operating—'

‘How about the anti-trust laws?’

‘Suspend them if necessary. Let government be the big trust.’

‘That's putting the government into business.’

‘It's pretty deep in already. I'd put it deeper in. Supervisory capacity, however, for the most part.’

‘Who'd do the supervising?’

‘Experts. Technical men. Scientists. Men who know their specialties.’

‘They're an impractical bunch. Yet we've got an engineer at the head of the government. I'm for him. Strong, silent man.’

‘Ah-h.’ Peter Weld merely uttered this equivocal interjection which might mean anything. ‘And I'd see the government spend a lot of money. Economize on useless expense and lavish money on public improvements, widen roads, reforest, build dams and develop water power, create game preserves, parks and play-grounds, make the country a park from end to end and beautify it. The time for governments to spend money is during depressions. What's money to a government? Government creates value, makes money.’

‘How'd the government get the money? Bonds? The people wouldn't subscribe.’

‘Try it and see. I think they would. A government should see to it that every man who wants a fair and honest chance to work should have it. That's not the case now.’

‘You're talking socialism as usual.’

‘Yes, government socialism, the socialized state. Just another word for paternal government, dictatorial government.

You want a dictator. What's he going to dictate about? Jobs, work, food and shelter, more even distribution of wealth, limits to the size of dividends, a chance for the common man.'

' Maybe something in what you say. Sorry, I must go now. Leaving for New York tonight.'

Bronze arose and Peter left the office. Nothing to Bill Bronze, a quick journey by train and plane to the sea-board on either side of the continent. Far over three-score and ten, he pooh-poohed the old limits to human life which had emerged from the smoke of Hebrew camp-fires three or four thousand years ago, unaware that he quoted Peter Weld. Mr. Bronze had a mind so impressionable and so facile that he caught things on the fly, as a windshield or a radiator catches insects and moths, and spreads them all over itself. Then he gave back to the world this assorted wisdom in improved epigrams, assured they were his own thoughts. Mr. Bronze unconsciously quoted a great deal.

Upon his return from New York, he summoned Richard Bronze to his office at an early hour.

' My boy, things are reeling and tottering. There's bad blood running under the surface. Men in New York are looking for revolution, red revolution, fire and blood. There's no need to get excited, but need to be prepared. What I want you to do — the trouble may start here in the middle of the country as well as any place — is to stock up Air-lawn with provisions, and some machine-guns, sub-machine guns, rifles and ammunition — '

' Dad, have you lost your head? Are you going to move us all to the country in a funk? '

' I never lose my head, son. I'm doing only what the big men in the east are doing — going out to their farms with their families, and getting ready. Now you do as I tell you.

Get the cars out there, all but the limousine. Get the Bellanca plane out there. Leave the little one here at the Municipal air-port. We may need that. Lay in plenty of non-perishable provisions.'

‘Well, of all the — ’

‘Here, don’t be a fool. Listen to reason. With bonus armies in Washington, and Iowa farmers patrolling country roads heavily armed and doing violence to judges, and with fire-brands loose like that hornets’ nest of lawyers — what’s their names, Evans, Collar, Goldberg, and the worst of all that tall bull named Powers — you can’t tell me we aren’t three jumps ahead of revolution.’

‘Why Dad, the government — ’

‘I know. I know. If Hoover were only dictator, everything would be safe.’

‘Why don’t the big fellows make him dictator? ’

‘We’ve got to re-elect him first. And the worst of it is, we have divided councils. Some are for Roosevelt, damn ’em. I can’t see why. A radical, almost a red, when what we need is a cool conservatism.’

‘Sure you’re not exaggerating the danger, Dad? ’

‘Am I given to it? When a man in New York like Mr. Mumford, cool-headed conservative, calm and deliberate, biggest banker — why I had an hour’s séance with him. He sat perfectly still, hands folded, never smiled or frowned, but made the most astonishing comments about the state of public opinion and wrath. He’s got his place on Long Island all ready to retire to, and his yacht provisioned and armed. Masses of people are just on the point of rising. They just don’t know whom to shoot at or they’d shoot. This plagued lawyer — Powers — he’s making speeches on street corners and pettifogging his communist stuff right in the court room, and even a man like Peter Weld, who ought to know better,

is spouting socialism right here in this office. How do you come to be going to his house? He told me you often do.'

'Did, not do. I haven't been there for some time, Dad.'

'I should hope not. See here, son, that girl of his is not in your mind, is she? I hear she's a fine piece of horseflesh. Nothing coarse about that, Dick, merely looks like blooded stock, only she's not.'

'Never mind, Dad, I don't altogether like this way of talking about her. She certainly considers herself blooded stock, and looks it.' Dick would have left the subject if he could, but when Bill Bronze started anything, he finished. Dick would have lied, but imagine anybody trying to lie to Bill Bronze.

'Is there anything between you and her, son?'

'No.'

'She'd try to, wouldn't she?'

'No.'

'You'd like to, wouldn't you?'

'Like to — what?'

'Own her — marry her — any way to —'

'Hush, Dad, right there. I'd marry her, yes, tomorrow, today; but I'd — well, you don't even think of her in the same breath with anything else. She's —'

'She's a shop-girl. Been at Swann's for years. You can't tell me anybody's been at Swann's for years and — and not be approachable, accessible.'

'You stop there! I won't listen to you or anybody else —'

'All right, boy, all right. Merely wanted to try you out. Never mind. I'm sure I didn't mean to hurt you, nor to be coarse. No, no, no. I guess the girl's all right, but you'd better keep away. She's not for you. She belongs to a different class.'

'Pretty soon classes won't matter much at the rate we're

going. Leveling everything up. And her class is the kind, maybe, to land on top. What're you worth, yourself, Dad? '

' God knows. I've still got the Sentinel, a pretty property, and a lot of real estate you couldn't sell under the hammer for enough to pay taxes, and oil-wells shut down, and mines and steel mills eating their own heads off. I'm property poor, with a vengeance. I don't know if it will ever come back. As for stocks — phew! — my boxes at the bank are crammed with 'em worth just what autumn leaves are worth. I think you'll still eat, when I'm gone, but that's about all, unless — unless I stick around ten years to straighten it out.' A grim and determined look accented itself upon the old man's face. Grim and determined he had looked for many years, just more so now. He said:

' Get busy and get Air-lawn ready as I tell you to.'

Richard, now a man of thirty-four, no longer the jovial boy, appeared very much the chip of the old block. One could see, to watch him and his father, similar qualities but differences of view. There looked out of his eyes no cordiality in regarding his father, no affection, no dog-like loyalty, only watchfulness, suspicion, self-defense. Would he come to a break with his father? Would he assert a will just as tough as his father's and awaiting only its moment to fly loose on a course of its own blazing?



Bill Bronze wielded his cleaver in his own shops. Ruthlessly, unerringly, with dispatch, he chopped off heads, especially graying heads, regardless of the flow of blood. He began at the steel-mills. The depression had hardly got well under way when he drove to the offices in the suburb called Sheffield, reminder of the foundry town of England, called for the pay rolls and with fat and devoted Alec Drum, now

general manager, and Richard, assistant general manager, went down the lists slashing and cutting with a red indelible pencil everybody over forty-eight — an arbitrary deadline — and every alternate name among even the younger men. He made exceptions only here and there when Alec Drum interceded for this or that one on the score of exceptional efficiency.

This shamble left behind, he drove next to the offices of the coal mines, then to the still more elegant ones of the oil company in the heart of Center Street, comprising a whole floor in the Federal Reserve Bank Building, and in each place repeated the process of closing down. He took in sail at every possible point, lightened overhead by throwing out ballast, human ballast, and felt a sense of relief if not satisfaction as he made his way through the wet and slushy streets of February to his own office at the Sentinel. If aware that he had laid a trail of despair behind him, called off weddings, broken off school and college courses, tapped slender life-savings for immediate necessities, separated husbands and wives by driving one or other out into the wide world to look for work, driven boys scarcely beyond adolescence out to hitch-hiking and riding box cars or even the rods in search of precarious chances for mere existence, he paid no heed to the cyclonic effect of his orders upon human life. No fault of his. The laws of supply and demand, laws of competition, the inexorable grinding of the wheels — he could not stop these or interfere with them. Helpless as anybody else, he had to trim sail to the wind, had to cut down overhead, had to prevent huge deficits, had to keep his companies if possible out of the hands of receivers. He couldn't help himself.

Early that morning he had taken the reports of quaking department heads at the paper, had raged at the falling off of

display columns, of classified lineage, of circulation, raged as much as he ever permitted himself to rage by turning red as a turkey-gobbler and, with swollen cheeks, used his rich, musical voice, soft even in his anger, as a cutting, slashing rapier that tore into the hearts of the men before him:

‘ You boys have grown into a flock of old men, old hens, sitting on nests and incubating. You don’t go out after business. You thrust out feeble trembling old hands and pray for business to drop into them. Now look at that paper! Call that a good paper? ’

He addressed Mr. Edward Brief, managing editor, who replied, ‘ Pretty fair, chief, I’d say.’

‘ Rottenest paper we’ve put out in five years. Not a real piece of talk stuff on that front page. Now look at that story, one hundred and thirty women and children killed in explosion in Budapest. Who cares about that? There isn’t a man in this room knows where Budapest is. Who put that story there on the front page? ’

Ned Brief put on his poker face. He was paid for that, and his ability to take punishment; yes, and his ability as a newspaper man. The Boss continued:

‘ Now, who — I ask you — who put that there? ’

‘ I guess the makeup editor.’

‘ You guess — don’t you know? ’

‘ I’ll check and find out.’

‘ You don’t know, but you’ll check and find out. Do you call that editing? You’re supposed to be in charge of putting out this paper. That’s what you’re for — and why put it on the front page? Why run that at all! Who gives a damn what happens in Budapest? I’ve told you a thousand times that a dog fight in Center Street is better news than a war in Europe. Must I say it every day — can’t I get it into your head! ’

He continued to rave and finally worked himself out. In utter disgust, he at last turned to 'go round the circle.'

Starting with the business manager, he looked at each man and said, 'How was yours,' paying little attention to the answers given, and almost immediately going to the next man.

To the national advertising manager: 'You were way down, weren't you?'

'Yes, we lost nine columns, but we were over last month.'

'What do I care about last month? I want you to go and get the business — all the business.'

'Yes sir. I'll get after our representatives. I'll write all offices and —'

'Write? Don't you know we put out a paper every day? Telegraph them that I want every inch of business there is! Don't write, telegraph!'

The subordinate subsided. He mused. 'Yeah, telegraph, and the Old Man just gave me hell because his telegraph bills last month went to forty-five dollars.'

It was the local advertising manager that he was 'laying for.'

'How was yours?' He knew full well. The report lay before his eyes; in fact, he held it in his hand.

'We were down,' said the long-trained and worried manager. 'Down 23 per cent, but the other fellow was down 40 per cent.'

'What do we care about the other fellow. If he breaks a leg, is that any reason why we should break an arm or get rheumatism? We're running *this* paper! We're not putting out the other paper! Forget them! Do you think a champion ever got to be champion by saying he's rotten and so is the other fellow? You sell this paper and you're supposed to sell it for its value! They've got —' thumbing through

the pages, 'a full page from Brown Dry Goods, and we had only six columns.'

'We got twice the money,' said the manager. 'And we have a double truck coming up tomorrow.'

'We're putting out a paper every day,' the Boss allowed himself to roar. 'The trouble with us is that we've got too many old men on this paper. I'm going to take a water oak club and go through this whole organization and knock some of these gray hairs out of here.' Half the department heads were men on the other side of fifty, and he himself in the seventies. 'You can't think any more. You can't work any more. We need young men; they've got energy and I'll supply the brains. The other paper seems to have some real salesmen. They can sell circles around us. We'd better—'

'They haven't a real salesman on their staff,' burst in the advertising manager. 'We've got a fine bunch of young men and they're doing fine work.'

'Does that look like fine work?' leered the Boss. 'The only way you can sell advertising is to give it away with publicity. You worked for little papers where you had to give it, and now you can't sell value on its merits.'

He turned to John Prather, the classified manager.

'They just beat you to death, didn't they?' he said.

'No sir,' said the manager of that department, the youngest man in the group. 'We had twenty columns and they had only sixteen.'

'But you were down, weren't you? Down three columns and they had a gain over last year of two columns?'

'Yes sir.'

'Well, isn't that beating you?'

The young man kept quiet.

'Just look at that special,' and the Boss held it up for all to survey, as if they didn't know it was already in the paper.

‘Just smeared you. Looks like we’d gone to sleep, dead asleep —’

‘But we won’t take that size, shape, or type,’ defended the young man. ‘Our rules prohibit black face and black borders.’

‘Who said so?’ asked the Boss. ‘Just alibis! I know *I* could have sold them into using our type, and — listen — son — did you bring that to me? Did you ask me if we could take it?’

‘No, we told them they couldn’t have it in this paper.’

‘What? You turned down business? Why are we putting out a newspaper, to turn away income?’

‘But our rules are against it.’

‘Rules — poof! I want to talk to you after meeting.’

He turned back to the entire group.

‘Just a bunch of tired old men — that’s what you look and act like. Never have a suggestion. Never have an idea. You just sit there and never say anything. Why do you come to these meetings? Why do we have these meetings? To talk things over and make this a better paper. I’ve got to do the thinking for all of us. You never do any thinking. You smoke too much. Cut it out. You’re thinking of golf and something else, all the time you’re here.

‘Now I want every one of you to get this. We’re paying big salaries to all of you — lots better than other papers pay. We give you everything you ask for in the way of equipment. I’m going to start cutting, if you’re not careful, and some of you are going to be mightily surprised some day.

‘Starting right now, we’re going to put out a newspaper up to our standard — and our standard is that we get and print the best in everything. We don’t care how other people run their business, but I’m running this business, and I’m telling you to get to work. Meeting dismissed.’

The men filed out. Almost without exception, they stared at the floor.

‘He had indigestion last night,’ someone said under his breath.

‘He lost fifty thousand yesterday in the stock market drop,’ said another.

‘Hell, he’s just pepping us up so we don’t let down while he’s away on his duck-shooting trip.’

‘When does he go?’

‘This afternoon, and going to be gone three days, according to the dope.’

A minute later in the office, he told a visitor; ‘We put out a real newspaper here, more news, better written news, more pictures, more advertising, better printing than any paper in the country. Look at that paper yesterday. Look what the customer got for his two cents —’

The conference dismissed, and this one visitor, he directed a woman secretary to order Richard to come right over from the steel-mills. The fierce looking old man then subsided into his chair, played with an ivory paper knife, looked out the window, oblivious of politicians, lawyers, and other useless hangers-on in a line outside, who peered into his office and awaited turns for a few minutes of his ear. No such place on earth for axe-grinders, publicity-hounds, nuts and cranks with schemes to make the world over new and beautiful, as a newspaper office. No time for these now. Storm raging. He must break in his first mate.

He felt no diminution of his own mental powers, though the old body now and then could not whip itself up to its former speed and resilience. Even that soft silken voice had grown husky and, in place of the rich diapason of other years, came out hollow and blunted. Pouches hung under the shrewd, keen eyes, dark pouches; the neck showed puffy and

purple above the wilted collar; the flush still rode upon the upper cheeks above the bones; but beneath, shadows lay in hollows. Nevertheless, a first-class fighting man. Few would say off-hand an old man. Fighting now, as he felt power slipping through his desperate fingers, power in the shape of ropes of dollars.

Dollars? What were dollars to him, though he clung to them in this extremity, as he had always done. Not for his own use; he had no expensive tastes except good clothes, a modest car, wholesome food which grew less and less with the years, and security for his family. No, he loved dollars, not for what they would buy, but for the power they would command. That he could say to this one go, and he'd go; to this one come and he'd come. That he could regiment men and make them march; could order about armies like a field-marshall; that hosts of men must give him their service; that he could buy the time of men, to pile up more dollars, to enlist more slaves; that, and nothing else, made a god out of dollars. Power, the last infirmity of noble minds? So? Is it indeed noble to gather up huge armies that one could not command, buy up thousands of men one could not keep employed? Noble or puerile? A man's game or a boy's? Not that any of these misgivings concerning the nobleness of his thirst ever entered the mind of William Bronze; but that they seethed in the head of his first-mate and son, as he came in his roadster slashing through the rotten snow to the office of the Sentinel.

‘Son, I’m going to trim this force here, just as I’ve done at the steel-mills. I’m going to begin with John Prather, the classified manager. He’s grown old, though he’s only in the early forties. He’s senile. Sits around all day on his behind and expects business to come in and hunt him up. These are not days for relaxing effort. Days to speed up, work doubly

hard, double-time. No time for clock-watchers. Time to lop off every clock-watcher.'

'But, Dad, he has a wife and three kids. One of 'em just ready to go to high school. Dandy little girl.'

'I can't help that. He can find a job in some smaller town. Too old here. Why, I saw an old newspaper man who had struck me for a job out at the end of the carline near home selling hot-dogs at a little stand he'd built himself. You can't keep a good man down. I saw another out by the park gates. He'd bought or rented a little shanty, painted it enamel-white and served hamburgers, with big slices of Bermuda onion, you know. There's always some way to turn an honest dollar.'

'Would you like to see Prather selling sandwiches?'

'Why not? It's an honest way to make a living. I think a lot of us would be happier working more with our hands. Me, I'd like to push a plane a while. I love the smell of pine shavings.'

'The hell you would!'

'Well, I would. Don't argue now, son, I beg of you. It's no time. Let's get down to it. Here's the list. Run your eye down it. It's just a matter of percentage, not to violate the law of diminishing returns. Is that the way you scholars talk?'

'Not to violate homes.'

'How can I help what happens to homes? I'm running a paper, and I've got to make it pay.'

'Why?'

The old man flushed a deeper red. Irritation. Richard saw the signs, and talked to himself. Look out, Dick. No mood for argumentation. You couldn't get your socialistic ideas into that closed mind with a crow-bar let alone your feeble little can-opener. Stop it, boy. Haven't you learned any-

thing about human nature, not even the nature of that commanding old man you've lived with for thirty-four years? Back up, back out. Keep your mouth shut. Bide your time. Wait till you're in command.

'Why? Why?' William Bronze showed himself completely at sea. He almost stammered; almost, not quite. He never stammered, seldom hesitated. He did now. 'You want—to run this paper as—as a charitable institution?'

'Why not?' said Richard, and added to himself, Why will you be a fool, Richard?

'If you do, then I give up. Wash my hands of you. You don't understand the first rudiments of business, which is to pay, pay, I tell you, pay.'

'Yes, I understand, Dad. I give up. You've got to make the paper pay; you can't build a charity institution till—' till you die, he was about to say. He stopped the tactless comparison with the course of most other American business men, but he didn't stop soon enough. William Bronze went white at the allusion to his death. He hated death, feared death, the only thing he did fear, though not the only thing he hated—labor unions, for example. He felt death looking over his shoulder in the day time, hovering over his bed at night. Sometimes he wanted to scream and shout at death and drive it away. Helpless. Futeile. Coming, coming nearer all the time. Science that he could buy, all the millions at his command, useless against the steady march of the years, months, days, that divided him from death. Now his heartless boy would talk of death in his very teeth. No use replying to this one only enemy that conquered and broke his spirit. He'd give every dollar he had to change places with that boy—yes, he'd do it, too, if he could, rob his own son of life, take his shoes and his healthy young body, strike out in the wide world and carve out another

career. Just give him a chance. Richard only deserved to be an old man, anyhow. He'd never do anything worth while in the world, with his namby-pamby notions of business for sweet charity's sake.

They cut the list, therefore, trimmed everybody's salary and wages, ten percent, twenty, thirty, and entirely lopped off scores of names. They threw bombs into homes, prevented weddings, broke hearts, scattered families, killed children born and unborn, strained the cordage of hundreds of lives to the breaking point, mauled and maimed and decapitated, to make the paper pay. They couldn't help it. The law, the law, the law of business.



‘Has the whole country gone mad?’ Again Bill Bronze had summoned Peter Weld, just to ‘get it off his chest.’ He found this method of mental catharsis soothing to a degree he could not understand. ‘Here we are, producing corn and wheat and piling it up unused, burning it for fuel, while thousands go hungry. The only problem is to get the stuff to those who need it, yet we can’t do it. We have cattle and hogs that it doesn’t pay to slaughter and market. We have coal and oil enough to heat and run the world, and yet people are freezing and motor-cars standing idle. Over-production and underconsumption, both! It’s just a question of distribution.’

‘Right, William.’

‘Then why haven’t we the ingenuity to distribute?’

‘Because some of you fellows don’t want to distribute, but concentrate. Your millions, Bill, what are they but mountains of corn and wheat, pork and beef, and coal and lakes of oil? You refuse to let go of them. You pile them up in sight of the hungry, the workless, the cold. You fence

them in and let nobody get at them. You destroy your foreign markets, and you refuse to recognize and trade with Russia.'

'But what am I, and men like me, to do? Scatter out everything we have, give it away? Suppose I did that with every dollar I've got, it wouldn't change things, wouldn't relieve any distress to speak of, and when it was all scattered the people would be no better off. I keep my affairs going, and they feed more persons, and steadily, too, than if I just gave everything away.'

'No. I don't mean to liquidate and throw the proceeds away; but I mean to run your enterprises, and take less profit, or none. Your paper, for instance; why make anything on it these days? Run it at cost, to give employment to your people, and the news to your subscribers. You don't need the revenue from it, you can eat—'

'What, run a paper for charity?'

'No, not for charity—for the public good.'

'Who ever heard of—you're a fool, Peter, a dreamer and doctrinaire. I'm not in business for fun; nobody is; nor for charity, nor for my health.'

'Why not?'

'What?'

'I say, why not? Aren't those pretty good reasons for being in business? For fun, for your health, for charity?' asked Peter.

'Nobody ever was.'

'Oh, yes, a lot of them. Arthur Nash, Edward A. Filene, William Hapgood, quite a number of others. They make money, too. The last time I saw Arthur Nash alive—no, the next to the last—he said to me, "Peter, my only fear is I'm going to be a millionaire in spite of myself." The very last time, he saw me a hundred yards away and cried out

with a big laugh, "Well, Peter, I missed it! My last dividend was \$600,000. That would have made me a millionaire; but I got rid of it by cutting it up into premiums for my oldest employees, and escaped." He honestly didn't want to be a millionaire, tied down in Cincinnati to take care of a million. He'd far rather be running round the country making speeches about his business methods to Chambers of Commerce. I can understand that.'

'I can't.'

'Of course you can't; it's not your line. But how about fishing? Shooting?'

'There's more fun right here — playing the game.'

'There was a time when you could have enjoyed the sporting life, did enjoy it. If you'd made the choice then, you'd have been a healthier man.'

'I'm perfectly healthy.' Bill Bronze winced.

'Well, you'd have been happier.'

'I'm happy. If it wasn't for this darned depression —'

'The depression is your own fault, Bill, yours and men like you. But it's not too late.'

Peter was growing redder and redder in the face as this conversation proceeded. With all the force in William Bronze's mind and character, Peter felt that the great business man had never grown up. His philosophy taught him that Bill couldn't help that, but what is philosophy when a man like Peter begins to grow hot under the collar? Like most extreme liberals, Peter's great weakness appeared in his impatience of narrower minds and intolerance with slow or incomplete mental processes. Peter at last burst forth:

'If there's a bloody revolution in this country, it's your fault, you and your bunch. You've brought it on your own heads, and on the rest of us. Whether we can escape it or not is a very doubtful question. Go ahead and be damned

to you! You little rich boys, you think you're great men. You're not, you're puerile. You captains of industry, you're playing at soldiers on lath-horses. You make me sick!'

'Envy, Peter! Who'd have thought you'd give way to envy?'

'Envy? Your foot — you — you —' Peter looked as if an apoplectic fit were coming on him. Perhaps he felt it, and flung out of the office. He knew he had been beaten in a dialectic combat, as every man is who loses his temper.



An officer from the health department entered the presence of William Bronze. His face looked serious.

'Come in, son. What's the matter?'

'Your daughter, Jane!' The officer hesitated to say more.

'What about Jane?' Bill Bronze half arose from his chair.

'She's — she's been going to John Prather's house — and it's quarantined for scarlet fever. It's a small house out south. Two children are down with it. Miss Jane Bronze is not too old to take it. It's against the law to go there; we have our sign up in front; but she's been driving round behind the house and slipping in; she takes food in, and stays a good part of every day. She's been doing it a week.'

'Is she there now?'

'I don't think so, sir.'

William Bronze called his secretary:

'Get Miss Jane on the phone.'

As soon as Bill Bronze had his daughter on the wire, he said, in well modulated tones:

'Jane, are you going out? Can you come this way? I'd like to see you a minute. No, nothing very important. I just want to talk to you. You're in a hurry, you say?' Then his voice took on a determined note, though no less gentle,

‘Never mind. Come anyhow. Quarter of an hour? O.K., Jane.’

‘All right, officer. Thank you a thousand times. I’ll see to it.’

When Jane stepped into the office, he began:

‘Sit down, Jane.’ This demand for her presence not unprecedented. Bill loved to have her drop in on him, indeed frequently made occasions to require her presence.

‘What is it, Dad?’

‘Got plenty of money?’ She knew that was not it. She had plenty, had always had plenty. Even when at the finishing school in New York, she had more money than other girls ever dreamed of, and dispensed it freely. She had a closet full of gorgeous clothes. She threw the door open for any of her friends who needed an evening gown or wrap, and said, ‘Take what you like, dear.’ They did. No, Bill Bronze had not called her here to give her money. She had a plethoric allowance of her own, the only direction in which Bill let his money go with a lavish hand. She therefore replied:

‘Plenty.’

‘Well, ah—Jane, it’s about going out to Prather’s house, where they’ve got scarlet fever.’

‘How’d you know about that?’

‘I know everything, honey. Health officer, if you want to know.’

‘How’d he know?’

‘It is his business to know. You’ve been going there a week. You shouldn’t, Jane.’

‘They’re my friends. I’m immune. I know I’m immune. I couldn’t catch it if I wanted to.’

‘But nurses and doctors are paid to do such service. They can get professional care, I take it.’

‘Only they can’t. He lost his job, you know. Mrs. Prather is trying to nurse those two kiddies herself. She’s likely to have the fever if she gets too run-down—’

‘So are you,’ said her father.

‘I’m not run-down. I’m perfectly well.’

‘You’re just as likely to take the scarlet fever as anybody. I don’t want you going there.’

‘Sorry, Dad.’ Jane looked at him coolly and said nothing more.

‘Miss Doyle,’ quietly as usual Bill Bronze spoke, but with evident purpose. ‘You send a written order to the health department, by special messenger. Tell them their quarantine at Prather’s house is being broken. Tell them to put men on the job and see that the quarantine is kept or I’ll know the reason why.’

Jane silently watched him. She would not this time let her father off. Once and for all she would let him know where they stood, one to the other. She began in the soft Bronze voice:

‘I don’t like that, Daddy. I don’t like a lot of things you’ve done to me. You love me — maybe too much, I don’t know. I love you, too. But you’ve checked me all my life. You’ve given me everything my heart could desire, except freedom. You’ve broken in on my friendships. You’ve dictated whom I should go with and whom not. You’ve driven away my lover and got him killed—and you’ve driven away every man who has tried to win my love. You’ve made me a hard, bitter—old maid. Yes, you have. You’ve ruined my life. I don’t care what happens to me. I wish I’d get scarlet fever and die. I do.’

‘Jane!’

‘Never mind now. Don’t stop me. You can’t. You fired John Prather. You’ve ruined his family. He may lose both

children and his wife, and the baby. He's lost everything else. He'll lose his home. He has nothing saved up — how could he? I've helped him a little, loaned him all the money I had. They're my friends. I love those children and the baby. Now you try to keep me away from them, the only one that stands between them and want and utter loneliness. Do you think you can succeed? I'll get to them. Leave it to me! You may ruin my life, but I won't let you ruin the Prather family. They're my friends.'

'Jane, Jane. You're not yourself. You're angry. You don't know what you're saying.'

'All right. I mean every word.'

'How have I ruined your life?'

'You know very well — Chris Weld.'

'Jane, I didn't realize —' Wonderful how quickly the old man caved in before the only person in the world he seemed to love — and fear. He who could browbeat all others, could not now, in his feeble age, stand up against this strong little woman as he had done when she was a young and inexperienced girl. He appeared pitiful; and Jane had a tinge of pity in her voice even as she went on relentlessly:

'I told you at the time I loved him.'

'I didn't know it made so much difference to you.'

'I told you.'

'I thought somebody else would do.'

'You wouldn't let me have anybody else. No, nobody else would do.'

'Oh, Jane. I'm so sorry.'

'Too late, and you know it. You've had your way, and you'd do it over again.'

William Bronze looked at Jane with a new respect. He knew that she understood him far better than he had thought

she could. But just what did she mean by his loving her too much? He would ask her. He did.

‘Well, if you don’t know—no, you haven’t read anything for a long time, have you? You don’t know about Mr. Barrett of Wimpole Street. You don’t know about Electra. Maybe that’s what’s the matter with you, all these years. Though you’re my step-father, I’ve never known any other nor any difference. You’ve tried to absorb me. You wouldn’t even let me finish at Hudson Park School, but made me come home. You said you got uneasy about my health. You really, perhaps, wanted to get me back where you could see me all hours, under your roof, whenever you came home. I don’t know that this is true, but it looks to me so.’

Her struggle between bitterness and tenderness toward her father grew more evident and more pitiful as Jane went on. The bewilderment and horror in William Bronze’s own face also grew pitiful. His jaw dropped and he looked at last and for the first time the old man that his years would indicate. The health department received its command and then—a countermand.



There followed a bank moratorium. All banks in the country by government order closed. No dollar could go in, no dollar could come out. Pale people stood about the streets or rushed from place to place to try for a little cash. They buttonholed each other, borrowed a dollar or two here and a dollar or two there. Most of them, however, laughed at their perplexity, joked about their relations with grocer and druggist, grew unashamed of going about with empty pockets, since nearly everybody had been ‘caught short.’ Tradesmen extended credit and accommodated almost all

who came. Nevertheless over the entire country hung a shadow of a great fear.

The word 'banker,' which had stood for generations as a title of great respect, suddenly turned into 'bankster,' a word of suspicion and opprobrium. Men who had long regarded their bankers as their masters and dictators, now felt a touch of fearful glee that the mighty had fallen. Never again, never again in their lifetimes would the cold haughtiness of the banker bear them down, conduct inquisitions into their business and most intimate concerns and pass sentence upon their enterprises and movements. The rule, the all-but-absolute rule, of the bankers had overnight crashed and fallen.

William Bronze needed cash for his payrolls, and William Bronze found it. Whether from the depths of safety deposit boxes, or from the daily run of the mills, somehow he found and paid on the nail, every claimant for salary and wage. He sat in his office, his face flushed, but otherwise showing no perturbation. The thin line of his mouth grew thinner, the quick darting of his eyes more restless and keen, if possible, than before, but otherwise he appeared calm, unmoved. Now and then an errand called him out, and he moved almost as springily as of old, looked fair into the faces of all he met, bowed occasionally, 'my sonned' somebody to right or left, said 'gentlemen' when he greeted a group of pressmen or linotype men in overalls, he who did not know how to dissemble. But he paid, every dollar and every cent he paid.

When Richard came to the office of the *Sentinel* in a panic about the payrolls for the mills, the morning the government closed all the banks, he saw no alarm in his father's face. Nothing but the heightened flush showed any inward disturbance. He quieted the nervousness of his son with a few words of confidence:

‘Now, my boy, don’t get upset. Don’t allow anybody to see anything in your face but assurance. We’ll pull through all this in a few days. It’s only to give us all a chance to catch our breath. Really it’s a godsend. Don’t be uneasy, I’ll see everything through. Keep calm, and cheerful.’

Richard went away greatly relieved, cheered, almost exhilarated, saying to himself:

‘I hand it to the old man. He’s a card! Nothing can down him. Fighting blood? He’s full of it! He never showed better.’

Peter Weld peered into the huge office where Bill Bronze sat, surrounded by agitated lieutenants, that first morning. Bill saw him, waved a hand, and called out:

‘Come back tomorrow at this same hour, Peter, will you? I want to see you. This morning I’ve got to pacify these young men and put guts into them.’

Peter returned promptly at the appointed time. He not merely wished to see one of the great admirals in the hour of defeat and shipwreck; he also wished to lend a hand, though a feeble one, to an old friend who might need encouragement and enlightenment. He felt, did Peter, that he understood to a degree what was going on in the American industrial, business, and social structure, though he knew that William Bronze and his like were fighting comparatively in the dark. Moreover, he cherished no ill-will toward Bill Bronze—the amazing thing about it—for the part he had played in the life and death of Chris. With Peter’s philosophy of determinism, he felt that Bronze could have done no other than he did, that Bill was a product of his own environment, his own nervous system, his own glands of internal secretion. Peter approved the answer of that politician to the question about his unvarying success: ‘I have

only one rule, I never forget a friend nor remember an enemy.'

Therefore Peter came. He began:

'How're you coming, Bill?'

'In small bunches and a long ways apart.' Bill used the vernacular of the cow-men, and smiled, the first time in two days.

'You'll weather through?'

'I think so. I don't know what's hit us, nor the direction it's coming from, do you?'

'It's been hitting you—us—for four years, don't you think? Really for twelve. This spurious prosperity was not prosperity at all, but a threatened famine. You can't build a safe structure on any form of spurious foundation. We've tried to build on a bad foreign policy, and the greed of a few men here at home.'

'I suppose you'd say we're all coming out Communists, that we'll have a Soviet here before we can say Jack Robinson.'

'I don't think so. Although Russia is shaking the world. There can be no mistake about that. We're more likely to pass through an era of fascism. We're headed that way, I think. I'm not sure. Nobody knows. The President is frankly the opportunist, experimenter, a quarterback trying different combinations; but he's wrestling with forces bigger than any one man, any combination of men. He may find the big businesses, steel, oil, railroads, crystallizing into nuclei again, combining against his projects, taking control, the old trade-guilds over again.'

'Well, I confess I'm all in the dark. The best I can do is to bull along. And the other guys in the east and all over the country don't seem to know any more than I do.'

'It chastens us, eh, Bill? Makes us humble? So far, so good.'

‘I don’t know about this humility stuff. It surely makes us think.’

‘Really? That’s good.’

‘You talk as if we hadn’t been thinking.’ Bill looked at Peter with a frown.

‘Not noticeably, except how to get more and more and more. Somewhat the way Louis the Sixteenth and his court thought.’

‘What do you mean by that?’

‘If that’s treason, make the most of it.’ Peter grinned as he quoted Patrick Henry.

‘You mean we’re in danger of revolution?’

‘We’re in a revolution. It’s going on. Don’t you see that? Or feel it?’

‘Yes. Things will never be the same. I know that much.’ A tinge of sadness entered the musical tones of Bill Bronze. ‘But I believe the danger of bloody revolution has passed.’

‘I do too, for the time; but you never can tell what may come, with twelve to fourteen millions out of employment.’

* *

William Bronze and Ned Brief, his managing editor, held a private conference after the stormy morning meeting of the heads of departments. The Boss had raged more than usual that day against the lethargic mood, or what he termed the lethargic condition, of all his staff. Lineage had fallen despite all the daily tongue-lashings he had administered in the last month. To be sure, the Sentinel had made more money in these stormy times than most newspapers, just because of the main force that William Bronze, the great publisher, had thrown into his task. He twisted and turned, tightened screws and put hydraulic pressure upon his ad-

vertisers. He delivered the goods, got the goods, made the goods.

‘Ned, my son, we’ve got to get that fellow Powers, the pettifogging miscreant. Now can’t you get something on him? I’m tired of his interference in city affairs. He’s nothing but a mosquito, but he buzzes and stings and keeps me awake. I want him stopped, squashed. He’s looking into every paving contract, picking holes in every bid, watching the police department, health department, even the parks, and the concessions for soft drinks. He’s trying to get Big Tim in a corner, and Andrea Santo, who’s always handled the bottled goods in all the parks. I’m tired of him. Get him.’

‘We’ve been after him, Chief, for six months. We can’t get a thing—’

‘He’s too smooth for you, is he, boy? I thought you were as smooth as they come.’

‘He’s smoother.’

‘You admit it?’

‘No, damn it. I don’t. He’s straight, that’s all. Straight as a string.’

‘You can’t tell me, son. He’s a man of thirty-five or six. He has no habits? Not a habit? Sunday-school manners and conduct? That big stud-horse of a fellow? There’s a woman somewhere. There’s a shady deal somewhere. He’s buying jurors somewhere. Now get him!’

‘I tell you, Boss, I’ve had a man on his track for six months. I know all about him. He goes from his room in a big apartment to his office, and from his office to his room. The only place else he goes is to Peter Weld’s house.’

‘Of nights? There’s a girl there.’

‘No, of afternoons. He always leaves before she comes home from Swann’s.’

‘What’s the new job he’s got? Something to do with the attorney-general’s office.’

‘Yes, he’s a—what they call special assistant to the attorney-general.’

‘Hooked up with the administration. How’d he pull that off?’

‘Well, he campaigned some for the President. He swings a big influence among the radicals, socialists, communists, anarchists, all the red bunch.’

‘We’ll get him on that. I knew he was shooting off his mouth, along that line, and has been ever since he’s been here. Can’t you pin him down with something treasonable?’

‘It’s a country of free speech, Boss. We’ve got reports of scores of his speeches. Besides, under this new deal, speech is freer than ever. And further, as I say, he’s got a toe-hold with the administration.’

‘Alibis, alibis, alibis!’ Bill Bronze musically but unmistakably expressed his contempt for the inefficiency of his chief mate on the paper. ‘I’ll bet I’d get him for jury-tampering. You know he’s done it. A man that refuses all other forms of vice must have one vice somewhere. That’s his, I’ll bet, jury-fixing. And I’d get him, or frame him. Now get busy and get him. I don’t want him around.’

‘I’ll do my damnedest, Chief; but you must know times have changed.’

Therefore the *Sentinel* carried a story one afternoon, not a conspicuous one, about the purchase of two members of a jury by someone in the firm of lawyers for the defense, Evans, Collar, Liggett, Goldberg, and Powers. Suspicion pointed to the youngest member of the firm. The *Sentinel* had taken a chance in its hurry, and printed the story before charges had been filed with the bar association. A suit for

libel promptly followed, and Bill Bronze exclaimed with satisfaction:

‘Now we’ll get him! Frame him. Put a woman in his room, and find her there. Take snaps of ’em. Dictaphone him. All the old rackets. Anything to get rid of him. You attend to it. I haven’t time to monkey with small fry.’

The small fry, however, proved a wary trout—and a big one. No one knew better than Hapwood Powers the kind of fisherman he was pitting his wits against. All his hatred of the Fifty-three boiled up, now that he engaged in battle with one of them, and one who, somehow, had injured his old friend and mentor, Peter Weld, and Penelope, his daughter. All the sly legal talent that concentrated itself in the office of Evans, Collar, Liggett, Goldberg, and Powers—and it must be confessed that all the tricks known to the trade had, at times, been practiced by that crew to save some man who deserved saving from a sentence of twenty years at the behest of the Fifty-three. All this talent now turned itself loose in the battle with Big Bill Bronze.

The *Sentinel* crowd, who anticipated delay after delay on the part of their opponents, found the case brought to trial in astonishingly short order. The *Sentinel*, usually able to do as it pleased with the courts, could make no headway in postponing. No later than May, the case had to come up; and up it came. The big fisherman, who did not wish to fool with small fry, found himself in court, listening to testimony from the jurors who, he said, had been tampered with. Meantime Bill had run almost daily stories assailing Hapwood Powers from every angle, calling him names, bolshevik, communist, incendiary, red, revolutionist, and hoping by this means to destroy him, while waiting for something tangible to be hung upon Hapwood’s character. Bill should have known, none better, how he was advertis-

ing the young attorney in a fashion for which many politicians and lawyers would have paid heavily. Did he not remember that young attorney, now at the head of the bar, who years ago had paid Bill five dollars every time he would print the young chap's name, whether in good connection, bad, or indifferent? Nobody knew better than Bill Bronze that 'every knock is a boost' to politicians, lawyers, and certain others in public life. Occasionally, however, Bill forgot the rudiments of his business, and allowed himself to err. His own young men felt that, in this Powers case, the old man's judgment was slipping, as the practice and prominence of Hapwood Powers increased by leaps and bounds in sixty or ninety days.

The Sentinel's attorneys got into the record repeated charges of sedition, revolution, anarchy, communism; while Hapwood's partners quite as often, yes oftener, succeeded in slipping in references to predatory wealth, unscrupulous journalism, invisible government, the control of the nation by the rich few, the bossism and czarism of William Bronze, the corruption of the city and state governments by this one blackmailing editor and publisher. If Bill's side slung mud, the Powers side slung tar and black paint with a big brush and in wide splashes. William Bronze, day after day, found himself haled into court over a petty damage suit for fifty thousand dollars. He heard himself called names he had heard directed at him only in nightmares, and he saw them gleefully printed in opposition papers under ribbon headlines. Chickens came home to roost. Sometimes he wondered if indeed it were true, that his judgment had failed him, that Zeus nodded, that he had passed the mark — he shuddered at the familiar journalistic word, dead-line — the mark of full efficiency and clarity for a man's mind. Some said that mark often came about sixty-five to seventy; and

that a business man ought not to trust himself to make decisions of grave moment after that time. Bill was honest, at least in self-scrutiny. He raged and stormed at Mr. Brief and his other subordinates as the days of the trial went by and no damning evidence of any kind could be produced against Hapwood Powers.

Then came at last the day when Happy took the stand in his own defense and justified the nickname. He put no antic humor on, his bearing grave, dignified, collected. His face as honest as a farmer's, his smile occasional, quick, kindly, the jury even moved to the edges of their chairs the better to hear the deep rolling bass of his voice. Any tyro in court procedure could see they liked Happy Powers, now a mature man, all the big boyishness of the twenties of his life gone into the solid poise and strength of the thirties. He even dressed more modishly, and bore behind him the prestige of a tenuous but real connection with the administration at Washington. Yes, man of affairs undoubtedly, a coming man, they all felt, for some reason persecuted by this big baron of business. Juries had none too high regard for the Fifty-three in those piping May days of 'thirty-three.

The jury retired for half-an-hour at the close of the trial on the fifth day and came back with a verdict of damages to the reputation of Hapwood Powers in the sum of twenty thousand dollars. Of course, the case was appealed again and again, but Happy collected eventually from the estate of the late William Bronze.



For the day arrived in those strenuous times, when the gallant old admiral went down. His fall came on a blistering June afternoon. He had gone home as usual for luncheon and afternoon nap, and had returned to the Sentinel,

after driving out to Sheffield to the steel mills to administer encouragement to Alec Drum. He felt good times in the offing, saw new orders coming in—small, but something—and smiled as he had not done for weeks, and joked patronizingly with his manager and with Dick. Now at the Sentinel, he sat in the seat of years of magnificent rule, a sort of throne, from which had gone out orders to the city limits, state boundaries, and at times to the lapping waters on the shores of both oceans.

Nobody noticed anything wrong, until suddenly he cried out, and his secretary saw him clutching his shirt on the left side over his breast. She called hastily for Mr. Brief and other help, and they laid him on the small divan. Ned Brief luckily remembered that whiskey could revive a failing heart, brought a flask from his own desk, and despite protests from the Boss forced a huge drink down the patient's throat. When the doctor arrived to give a hypodermic, he declared that the quick action of Mr. Brief had saved the Boss's life at least for the time. Richard arrived at the same moment as the ambulance, and the old gentleman actually summoned up a little smile, as he murmured low:

‘Take the helm, son.’

‘No, Dad, no. Not for years!’

‘Yes.’ He said nothing more until at home in his big carved mahogany bed. The morphine eased the pain, but either the opiate produced nausea, or the heart did. He lay in a semi-stupor from drug and sickness most of the night. His little steel wire wife ordered everything in and out of the sick room. Even doctors and nurses bowed to her crisp dictation. She never demanded anything unreasonable, but snapped out her opinions in collected and helpful fashion.

Richard and Jane behaved in the same controlled manner. One of the doctors said it was a pleasure to work in this

house, where nobody got in the way or got off their nerves, but all kept cool and lent a hand. None of the family slept except Mr. Bronze, who dozed fitfully, under the influence of the morphia.

Jane, some years older than Richard and possessing much knowledge of life and death from her unceasing welfare activities of recent years, standing rigidly in the hall outside her father's door, answered Richard's question:

'Yes. It's the end. He knows it. The doctors never admit it. Their business to fight, and put fight into everybody round them. That's right. But he's going. It may take a day or two.'

Jane wrung her hands, the only evidence of deep feeling.

'He's going out with—with the old regime, isn't he?' said Dick.

Jane bowed her head in understanding, and Richard continued:

'His ideas of life and business, they're gone or going. I know those ideas will fight to live, too, and some of the old fellows who stand for them will fight, but—'

'Yes, Dick, there'll be a long fight and a big fight to keep the old order; but Daddy, well Daddy's tired. Poor, dear old Daddy.'

Then Jane broke down for the first time, and shook with sobs, as Richard took her in his arms, held her, and tried to soothe her. Soon she got control, and sat down in a window-seat, with a crimson cushion, over which the night wind fanned in coolness, for a thunderstorm had come, appropriately they both thought, in the earlier evening. Dick stood behind her looking out into the night.

'You loved him a lot, didn't you, Jane? Why?'

'Of course I loved him.'

'Just as well be honest now, Jane, and frank. Why?'

‘Well, why not? He’s my—our father.’

‘But you had some cause not to love him.’

‘I know. Of course I know. You mean he’s thwarted my love, maybe ruined my life? Yes, but I love him anyway. You know some women adore men who beat them? I wonder if that’s it? I love him in spite of, perhaps because of, his dominance over me.’

‘What will you do now, Jane, that the dominance is gone? Will you—will you marry?’

‘I don’t know. I’d be afraid of most men now. Fortune-hunters. Not likely to find a middle-aged man who wouldn’t be. Oh, it’s unfeeling to be discussing such things, Dick. But people can’t help thinking about them, no matter if it is such a time. What will you do? Penny?’

‘No, it’s not Dad that separates us. He’d never have put up a fight to prevent my marrying her. She’s the obstacle herself. Says I’m not man enough. Says I only truckle to my father and the System. Says, too, that—that Chris stands between us.’

‘Does she say that?’ Jane looked up at him as if the idea were new to her. Perhaps it was, though it would occur to almost anyone else. For herself she felt closer to Penny, because of Chris; and thought Penny felt closer to her. No doubt this feeling belonged to them both and each was aware of it. Why, then, should it be different where Richard was concerned? Yet different it was. Penny doubtless connected him in her thought much more closely with William Bronze, a lieutenant of the Big Boss, partner and heir apparent to the throne that had destroyed her brother. She did not have faith that the reign of Richard would differ greatly in the long run from the reign of William. That must be the explanation. Jane’s mind went rapidly over this ground, if not for the first time, at least for the first conscious

and thorough time. Jane could understand. She did not impart her understanding to Dick that night, indeed not until much later. She changed the topic:

‘You will take charge and carry out Dad’s policies?’

‘Why Jane, you know very well, I can’t. I’ll take charge and swing in behind the new movement to socialize industry. I don’t know the newspaper game. I’ll handle the mills, and mines, and oil wells, and all business affairs. Ned Brief can run the paper. I can look after the business end of that, in a way. How can you socialize a newspaper, by the way, and make it pay?’

‘You can make it a public servant, and pay enough, can’t you?’

‘Perhaps.’

‘I’ll bet I could.’

‘Jane, I believe you could. Why don’t you do it?’

‘Just fancy!’ Jane almost laughed.

‘Well, why not?’

‘I don’t know even as much as you do about the newspaper game. And a woman! The town would laugh.’

‘They’d have no right. You’re your father’s daughter, just as much as, and even more than I’m his son, even though—yes, you are. You could learn. What did he know when he went into it? Nothing. This is a day of new things.’

‘Oh, Richard, we shouldn’t sit here scheming and planning before—it’s heartless.’

‘It does sound cool; but you and I know it’s not. So let’s be honest. We’d be thinking these things if we weren’t talking them. And what’s the difference between thinking and talking?’

‘Decorum. Good taste.’

‘Oh, I don’t know. Besides—well, I want to say it. I

did admire the Boss in a way. Won't there be a furore in the town when it knows he's—gone?"

"Gone! I can't picture it. Daddy, Daddy." Jane quickly began again to cry.



Next morning Mr. Bronze kept his consciousness, though visibly weakened. He spoke little, could speak little; but Jane, cheerful of face and manner, sitting beside him and holding his hand, heard him mention the names of Dr. Junius Effingham, the rector of St. Jude's, and of Peter Weld. She made opportunity to discuss with the doctors the advisability of sending for these two men. She had never before heard her father mention the rector, and could scarcely believe now that she heard aright, but she had made him repeat. There could be no mistake. The doctors, after much discussion of pros and cons, at length gave their consent. They felt that refusal might have worse effect upon the patient than admission of the visitors.

Dr. Effingham came, took William Bronze into the Protestant Episcopal church, and gave him the Holy Communion. Bill seemed to take satisfaction in the procedure. The whole affair, however, showed clearly to family, nurses, and doctors, that Bill himself had given up the fight. They, too, therefore relaxed efforts and sought primarily to render him comfortable.

To make quite sure, Jane asked her father again, if he meant he wished to see Peter Weld. William Bronze nodded unmistakably. Jane therefore, after telephonic communication with her father's old friend, sent chauffeur and limousine. When Peter arrived and approached the bedside, William Bronze opened his eyes, took Peter's hand and held it, while Peter sat down on a little white chair.

‘I’m glad to see you doing so well, Bill,’ Peter said.

‘No.’ Bill moved his head from side to side. ‘I’m done for.’

‘No, no, Bill.’ Peter knew the futility of his denial, but did as every man does in the circumstances. He could see the sunken cheeks and eyes, and drawn mouth, almost the skull showing under the flesh that had already begun to pass away.

‘You’ll see, Peter. My will. Leaves everything to St. John’s Hospital, after the family is provided for. Would have been handsome a year ago. Not much left now. Stocks tumbled.’

‘Yes, yes, Bill. Everything’s all right.’

‘My life—not much to show.’

‘None of us can show much. It’s the living that counts. The growth. You’ve grown, haven’t you, Bill?’

‘You said not, Peter. Called me little boy. Never grew up.’

Peter kept his ear very close to William Bronze’s face to catch his words, more words and clearer than William had spoken since his seizure. Mrs. Bronze, Jane, and Richard stood huddled in a wondering group on the opposite side of the large room. They could not hear William Bronze at all; and Peter Weld heard only indistinctly. Peter said:

‘I was mad when I said that. I—I take it back. You have grown, of course.’

‘Shouldn’t get mad, Peter.’ William tried to smile. ‘Now tell you what I want—Richard—needs men like you. Run the paper—not for charity—but—but—help him.’

Not one word of Chris. Nothing about Jane’s love for Peter’s boy. All gone with the past. Only the immediate future, and his son’s carrying on.

‘I’ll do all in my power, Bill, which is mighty little. Advice — he can come to me any time; but I’m a bolshevik, you know.’

‘So’s he. Your innings. Things never the same. I don’t belong. He does. You do.’

Remarkable grasp in the very hour of death, of the currents flowing in the social stream. Defeat of the old; the birth of the new; and even these glazing eyes not blind to it. Peter felt a certain grandeur about Bill Bronze, now stripped of all his egoism, his dominance, his over-riding will, his ruthlessness. Nothing left except a feeble wistfulness like a mist, but pierced by the light of a mental clarity not given to many even in the prime of life.

Would that mind go on working, growing, creating? Or would it go out into unconsciousness and the black void? Peter could not tell. Ever since the death of Chris his thought had swung strongly toward personal survival, but no proof, no scientific proof, only intuition. One man’s intuition as good as another’s. No. Great minds clearer. And the great minds all the way down through history had clung to the same intuition. Bill and Chris would meet, perhaps, find themselves on equal footing. All the little squabbles and differences of earth insignificant, not forgotten, but simply dated, shrunken, dwarfed. Bill Bronze a great man, but never greater than right now. A selfish, greedy man, greedy for power; but stripped of all, a helpless, weak skeleton, still great. Was it Bill, or was it Death that appeared so majestic, so august?

Penny came at five o’clock. Richard went after her, and brought her to Jane. The two mature women met as women should, and do. They went together into the great library music-room and stood by the piano. Penny thought of how they had stood by the dining table the day the news

came that Chris had died. Penny wondered at the evident deep grief in Jane's face. Jane had told her more than any other, except Dick, of the conflicting emotions she held toward her father, love and anger, tenderness and bitterness, the very ingredients that go to make up the strange cup of life that all must drink, so sweet and yet so bitter.

Peter Weld would not go away. Jane tried to send him home. No, he would stay about the place. If he could be of any comfort to Bill in these last hours, he would remain in reach. Three times that day, Bill mentioned his name, and three times they brought Peter in from an adjoining chamber; but he did no more than sit beside the bed and take Bill's hand. Bill seemed to know he was there. At sunset the end came.



The great funeral took place in St. Jude's. The altar and all the end of the church where the altar stood bloomed with flowers. Most of the names known in the mouths of all the city came, lawyers, doctors, merchants, bankers, officials; although many stood out conspicuous for their absence. These last had lost an enemy and breathed out a fervent thanksgiving. 'Thank God, the old pirate is gone.' Some prominent men flung loose the very night he died in orgies they had not dared, for long, to indulge. Some began plotting and planning what they would do at the city hall, and the state capitol, and even Washington, to signalize their freedom from the Boss.

Fully half the great gothic church sheltered persons whom 'nobody' knew. Men in overalls, or their Sunday best differing little from overalls, women in drab dress, even hatless, newsboys, ragamuffins of the streets, two of them on crutches, ex-convicts, underworld characters, Negroes, north-

side derelicts, Italians, Hungarians, Swedes. If it be true, as Peter Weld had said, that the success of a life can be measured by the number of the poor who attend the funeral, then Bill Bronze had not entirely failed. No life can touch so many other lives, as Bill's had done, without imparting some warmth. In some, in many, he had kindled the heat of hate; to others, many others, he had imparted a gentle and stimulating glow. Perhaps the comfortable warmth and quiet glow stood in direct proportion to the distance from his person. Who can say?

Jane looked trim, small, but regal in her black garments, with her crown of black hair, beside her little iron-gray mother. Richard supported the two. Strange that Peter Weld and Penelope should be sitting with these mourners, among a large aggregation of cousins near and far. Yet Jane would have it so, and Richard felt the comfort of Penny's nearness, though she sat in the pew behind him.

The rector did his best, and a noble best it proved. He steered as clear of personalities as he could in the case of so public a character. His comments on the life and achievements of William Bronze formed a colorless catalogue of dates, facts, foundations of enterprises. His allusions to the family of William Bronze proved sympathetic, skilful, laudatory. Here he stood on safer ground. The music, the majestic intoned service — all that bereaved persons could desire.

Back from the great mausoleum in the cemetery where William Bronze lay in a marble crypt, the funeral cars discharged their mourners at the Bronze palace on the hill. Her mother, the little iron-gray woman, Jane took tenderly to her room and seated in her favorite chair with maids to wait on her. Then she came down and superintended a subdued tea for all the kin and the Welds. Peter and Pe-

nelope had asked to be delivered at their home, but Jane had taken possession of them, rather clung to them, and asking if Peter were exhausted and receiving the answer that he was not, had insisted upon their coming clear home with her. At last she gave consent to their going and ordered out the chauffeur and limousine. To her astonishment, Dick's roadster preceded the big car, and Dick calmly declared he intended to take Penny with him. Jane did not demur, in fact seemed rather pleased, and considerately handed Peter Weld into the big car while he tried to send her in ahead.

'Richard, folks don't do things like this,' said Penny, as the two drove away.

'That's why I do. Is there any reason we shouldn't let go our nerves and rest a little?'

'What would—what would your friends say?'

'Little odds. And they'll say, after today, that you belong to the Bronze family, anyway.'

'So I've been thinking; but I don't.'

'You will, Penny, won't you? Now's my time to show you what I'm going to do, and—to need you. I need you, badly I need you.'

Richard, without knowing it, struck the right note. Woman loves perhaps above all else to be needed. Penny's heart went out to him; but she said:

'Don't talk about it today, Richard. I can't talk about it now. You know how fond I am of you, you and Jane both; you really are like—'

'No, don't say it. I couldn't stand that brother and sister comparison. I'm going to have you, Penny. Nothing can keep me from it. I'm going to press this matter home to you with all my might. It's been so long, Penny, that I've loved you. Twelve years, think of that! Longer than—now

you're twenty-eight, and I'm thirty-four, and—and we should have been married for years and years.'

'Doesn't that show you, show us, that we shouldn't? That—something's in the way? We—we couldn't have stood separation, if we were meant for each other, and you—you all the time trying to—to bring it about?'

Richard stopped the car in a quiet elm-shaded residence street, to look at Penny. Here was a new note. What did she mean? Twenty-eight? She certainly looked far more beautiful than when at seventeen he had seen her dancing in the moonlight, more beautiful than when she came home from Wellesley a mature woman. Business life had not hardened Penny, only made her richly sumptuous, poised, assured, mistress of herself, and to Richard, without a peer among women. If, as some students said, a woman reached her perfection at a certain moment in her life, a matter often only of a few months, or even weeks, and then like a gorgeous flower began to fade, to go down on the other side, then to Richard's eyes, to almost anybody else's, Penny had just come to that full bloom. All the time developing faster than others about her, yet she seemed never until now to have developed to her fullness. Richard's breast rose and fell as he looked at her, but he quickly asked:

'Just what do you mean? Do you know of such an obstacle?'

'Chris.' Penny almost whispered the beloved name.

'You mean that you're so unforgiving that you couldn't forget—and it's not my fault, Penny. Good God, I wish, you know I wish, with all my heart, Jane had run away with him. My father—'

'Yes, Dick dear, your father. I'd see him all the time in our home. Couldn't forget. I—I didn't go today out of

regard for him—forgive me, Dick, if I'm crude and seem hard. I went for you and Jane. Daddy went for your father, too. Peter can see round or see over. He's bigger minded than I am. I can't see over the obstacle.'

'Penny dear, you'd forget all that in time. I'd be so tender of you, it would fade out. It couldn't help but fade out. Time would overcome it.'

'I'm very tenacious, Dick. I'm over-sentimental. You know that. I'm far too intense for my own good, and too imaginative. I'd see your father between you and me, at all unseasonable times, and I'd see you growing into your father all the time. There, I didn't want to talk about it; and you made me.'

'Oh, Penny, this is awful! Just now when I'm free! All my hopes of twelve years centered on this moment. I'm in control, Penny, don't you see? And a new day is here, don't you understand? I'm in harmony with the new deal, the new effort, the—the new—revolution even. And we can work in harmony, you and I. My father's gone, don't you see, Penny? I'm in his place, darling. I've got to have you. I've got to have you. What's life to me without you? I—I can't go on. This is my big moment, Penny, don't you comprehend? It may sound heartless, waiting for my father's shoes; but honestly that's what I've done. I've been waiting twelve years for this day—and for you. And now—you—oh, Penny!'

'I hurt you, Dick, I know I do.' Penny was crying. 'I'm so sorry. But now you've compelled me, I must finish. Your father is dead, but his influence goes on, and his effect on people's lives goes on, Jane's, yours, mine, and hundreds of others. They'll never get over what he has done to them. While he lived he controlled and ruled them and often

twisted and dwarfed them. Now that he's dead he still reaches out of that mausoleum, grasps them and commands them. He does us, you and me.'

'Penny! That's impossible!'

'Impossible to escape. We couldn't overcome it, Dick, all our lives long.'

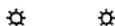
'Penny, there's something else that makes you feel like that. Somebody else.' This new thought stunned Richard. 'Who is it? You never go about with any one man, but with lots of them. Do you still love Dr. Ned Engren?'

'Yes. I'm devoted to him, but as you know, he's married.'

'Anybody you love?'

'I—I don't know. Only don't ask that, Dick. That's really not what is in the way. It's Chris and your father.'

More than that, he could not get Penny to say. He grew paler until haggard, while she wept.



Seminole went to sleep that night from under the stern hand of Bill Bronze for the first time in nearly half a century. Lights winked on and winked off, surface cars rattled and clanged, motors slithered along the asphalt with a sound like swishing silk. Gay parties carried on in speak-easies, hotel cafés, and clubs, some talking of him, more not. The police department pulled its belt up and looked about for a bigger cut than hitherto. Sick children cried and fretted in fevered cribs. Old women dozed and muttered toothlessly in hot apartment rooms, and wielded palm-leaf fans, not knowing why they could not live in cottages among trees, live and die there. Men walked the streets in shoes that barely covered the soles of their feet, belatedly looking for jobs in kitchens of restaurants, as they had been doing since dawn, and now and then furtively asked for a handout, for a flop, with not

the remotest idea whose hand had pushed them down. At the point of desperation, John Prather, late advertising manager of the *Sentinel* sat by the open window of a smothering flat, unheeding the fretting from his convalescent children, grappling with the sterner problem of the rent and credit for groceries. He could not know that on the morrow Jane Bronze would right all that, and that the dead hand could no longer reach out to hold him down.

Indeed it rather seemed that even if alive that hand would have relaxed; that forces stronger than it had let themselves loose in the country and the world; that the death of Bill Bronze only marked the death of an era—the era of big business dominance over the lives of little men and little children. Never again, to satisfy his acquisitiveness and that of the Fifty-three, or fifteen hundred and fifty-three, should red-edged competition drive men out of work, shut them out of all doors to jobs, send them wandering over highways, sleeping in the open in rain and snow. Never again should human ghouls bend over garbage cans in alleys and hang round the back doors of hole-in-the-wall eating joints.

Whether wisely or foolishly, the big city and the big country breathed a sigh of thankfulness. Big Bill is dead. Big business is dead. Will it and he stay dead? Or will he and it rise again to hold the masses down. Not if the masses know it. The only trouble with the masses is they know so little, least of all their own power. They could keep Bill dead.

Jane

A casual and perhaps thoughtless word from her brother, Richard, while their father lay dying, took root in the mind of Jane Bronze. Dick had suggested that she take hold of the *Sentinel* and run it. So empty had her life become, with her desperate attempts through the years at sublimation, her studies and her arts, her welfare work and her charities, which one after another and all put together had failed to still the ache in her heart, that she caught at any hint, however slight and maybe ridiculous, which might show that somewhere she could fill a need. Left as one of the executors of her father's estate and a member of the board of directors of the paper, she could, if she would, take a strong hand and, if Dick consented, a controlling hand in the management.

Announcing to Richard one morning at breakfast soon after the funeral that she meant to go down at once to the *Sentinel* and 'look round,' she received his hearty approval. He said:

'Good. I'm glad. It can run itself, in a way; well organized; but you can learn to do it better. I've got more than enough on my shoulders. I've got to go to Chicago tonight to meet with steel men from all over the country and draw up a code for the NRA. It's great stuff, Jane. We're socializing industry. Taking the competition out.'

'I'm not completely sold on this new socializing business. I'm afraid it will break down. We've got to have competition to develop initiative. That's the way Mr. Menger

thinks, as far as his lumber business is concerned. And Mrs. Deal thinks the same about her dress factory. And Mr. Atkinson about shoes. I've been talking to a few people.'

'Little people,' replied Dick.

'Oh, I don't know. Pretty important hereabouts. Active in the Chamber of Commerce, all of them.'

'Littler a man is, the more active in all kinds of circles. Goes round in circles.'

The iron-gray little Mrs. Bronze sat looking at the bunch of red and yellow garden flowers in the center of the table, with empty, staring eyes. She wore heavy black which accentuated the impression of cast iron in her composition. A pathetic little figure, like a stove with the fire gone out. The only warmth she had ever known, an uncertain warmth, now blowing hot, now cold, lay quenched in the crypt at Maple Hill. The red hot galvanism of Bill Bronze had long ago burned her out. Her children had done little more than patronize her. Bill had demanded all their allegiance, respect, awe and fear. All done now, the little machine woman, just a robot for keeping her palace going on Hunter's Hill. And to what end? For two children verging on middle age, in whose thoughts and hearts she knew she held only a negligible place.

Jane appeared at the paper about ten o'clock in the morning. She entered her father's great palatial office, stood about in the familiar place, looked at the pictures and bits of statuary, all of which she knew with eyes shut, and talked to her father's former secretary. Mr. Brief, busy with the layout of the first edition of the afternoon, could give her only scant attention until nearly twelve. She avoided her father's chair, between desk and table, sat down first in one of the others then in another and felt ill at ease. She had a sense of invading a sacred place, a feeling of profanation. Awe came

into her soul and a comprehension of the power this place stood for. She could almost feel it raying out from this room, emanating from her own fingers as, in imagination, she thought of herself in charge. She breathed quickly and sat with hands tight clasped in her lap, looking out of the window at the buildings across the way. She shrank from exercising this power over so many lives, for good or ill, and fell to pondering how she could make it for good.

Miss Steinman's obsequious chatter becoming a bit irritating, Jane sent her on an errand in order to be alone. Then others came who knew Jane — the society editor, a woman of poise and dignity; the favorite woman reporter, whose by-line everybody in Seminole knew; the woman photographer. Jane talked pleasantly with all of these and felt a rising tide of exhilaration at the growing ease and intimacy of the contacts and the thought of what they might become. The paper had made these people, given them a life work, made them happy. At least, they appeared to Jane to be happy and to be desirous of going on; in fact, fearful they might not be allowed to go on. She would remove that fear; and the first sense of doing good arose in her heart.

Then came Ned Brief, the first edition safely 'put to bed.' He sat without hesitation in the seat of the Boss and, Jane thought, with a bit of assertiveness. Very well, that is as it should be — for the present. She herself had come to learn.

‘How’s everything, Ned?’

‘Going on about as usual. Of course we miss the Chief. But he was often away.’

‘You will carry on as Father did?’

‘Yes, unless Richard wants to make changes — or possibly you?’

‘No. Not at present, anyway. Richard has too much else to do, and suggested that I come down and look things over.’

‘Very good idea; but — I shall be glad to take responsibility and relieve you of anxiety. You know I’m pretty well used to it anyway.’

‘Yes, we feel safe with you here, Ned, and shall always.’

‘Thank you, Jane.’

‘I might be interested in some phases of policy. For instance, do you intend to keep on backing the administration at Washington as you are doing?’

‘I think so, don’t you? At least during the honeymoon. I think perhaps it’s going pretty strongly socialistic and there’ll be a kickback next winter, when Congress assembles, you know.’

‘I don’t like anything socialistic, Ned. I know Richard has leanings that way, but I think the old system administered with benevolence for the masses — that’s certainly best.’

‘Quite right, I’m sure. Now as to the makeup of the paper — ’ The first edition came in at that moment, and Ned spread out the copy on the table between him and Jane. She moved her chair round more nearly to his side, that she might look it over with him. ‘Do you like it as it is?’

‘Yes. I know nothing about such things, but it’s been a success the way Dad planned it and carried it on. I see no reason to change it in any way. I’d say let it alone, wouldn’t you?’

‘Yes. I agree. It’s a grand paper, Jane.’

‘Well, I’ll be moving on, Ned. I’ll come down from time to time and keep in touch with you. Perhaps you’ll consent to instruct me a little.’

‘Certainly, Jane.’ He had known her since, as a little gangling girl, she had come here to visit Bill Bronze. ‘Anything I can show you.’ Then he thought, ‘Hell, is she actually going to take hold of the old rag?’



Next morning Jane came down earlier and, while Mr. Brief busied himself in the composing room with the day's layout, she took her father's chair so that Ned Brief, when he did come in, had to accept another one. Neither showed any awareness, but both felt the significance. Their talk halted even more than on the previous day. Richard came in about eleven o'clock and the conversation became three-cornered.

‘Having fun, Jane?’ said Dick.

‘Not yet.’

‘She intends to have.’ Brief said this, and laughed uneasily.

‘I think it'll be good for her,’ said Dick, ‘whether it's good for the paper or not.’

‘Oh, she'll be good for the paper, I'm sure.’ Ned Brief grew more cordial and tried to put enthusiasm into his words. ‘She has excellent ideas.’

‘I don't know. It's a big job, and all I can do at first is to listen and learn. Dick, what do you think of all this socialization of industry? They'll be wanting to put the newspapers under government control next.’

‘It couldn't be done,’ said Ned. ‘It would limit freedom of speech and freedom of the press.’

‘Fascism always does,’ suggested Jane.

‘We've got no fascism. We're verging more on socialism,’ said Richard.

‘Well, I don't see how it can work, if carried to a great extreme,’ said Jane. ‘The very genius of our country calls for private initiative and therefore private ownership.’

‘And leads to unevenness of wealth and living conditions, depressions and panics,’ Dick said. ‘I don't see why we can't have some of both. A greater control by the government in production and exchange and at the same time private ownership of most forms of capital. Now monopo-

lies, that's different. The government might own railroads. It will soon have to take them on mortgages anyway; and other countries own and successfully operate their railways. Then there are coal mines and oil—'

'Would you be willing to give our mines and oil wells to the government?' said Jane.

'How could we? The government hasn't yet asked for them. We couldn't give them away to the public either, even if we wanted to. We wouldn't know how and it wouldn't get anywhere. Not unless everything were given away—all real estate, factories, stores, tools, everything. That would have to be done all at once and by everybody and everybody become joint owners, as in Russia.'

'Then it wouldn't stay that way. The few enterprising ones would soon have it all back,' said Jane.

'Unless the whole state became socialistic, and that means revolution,' said Ned Brief.

'Yes, I don't see how to do anything.' Dick looked despondent. 'We're tied by our system. All we can do is to go ahead and administer our property for the public good as much as possible, pay high wages, take small profits.'

'Take all the profits the market will bear,' said Ned.

'Not all, perhaps,' Jane looked thoughtful, 'but a good profit, I should say. Daddy had about the right idea.'

'Good Lord!' Dick looked at her in astonishment. 'Don't you know Dad grabbed every dollar that was coming to him and a lot that was not?' Ned could not hide a grin.

'There's one little matter, Ned,' Jane spoke with a decisive manner, 'I'd like to give John Prather his job back. Classified manager, wasn't he, something of that kind? If you can't give him that job, then something else.'

'We can reinstate him, Jane, in a good place. And really,

he's a good man. He's worked on the city staff in his time. I'll look around.'

'I know he'll make himself useful.' Jane's first act, then, resulted in the return of her old friend.

The tall city editor, Jim Gardner, lounged in, a couple of sheets of type-written stuff in his hand. He half-nodded and half-apologized, more by manner than by word, to Jane, and handed the story to Ned Brief, saying,

'Better play this, eh? Front page in the two o'clock and the rest of the day?'

'Um—' Ned glanced at the lead. 'Sure. That's good news.'

'What is it, Ned, may I ask?' Jane reached for the sheets.

'Divorce of prominent people. The Jenningses on Hunter's Hill. Harry Jennings names Dr. Eskridge as correspondent.'

'What? Evelyn Jennings? Impossible! Why, she's a friend of mine. We went to school together. Are you sure of your facts?'

'Of course,' Ned Brief grew a bit curt. 'We always are sure, on a deal like this. Court charges.'

'But it will ruin Dr. Eskridge. He's a friend of mine, too.'

'Can't help that,' Ned smiled now. 'Too bad. Sorry. All that. They shouldn't have got into this jam.'

Jane read the sheet to the end, and handed it back to the waiting city editor who moved toward the door. Jane stopped him with the words:

'Wait, Jim. I hate to print that in my—our paper—'

'Doctors can't advertise,' Mr. Brief answered with the first thought that would occur to his craft.

'I know. I'm not thinking of income. I'm thinking of Evelyn and Joe Eskridge. They're dear friends of mine.'

Can't this be settled in some quiet way without getting into the papers?'

'It might, if it never got into the papers,' admitted Ned Brief. 'But it will. No stopping it. The other fellow will have it in his two o'clock. We'll not let him beat us.'

'It will drive them out of town!' Jane looked distressed.

'Their own fault,' suggested Jim Gardner.

'No. Just one mistake, maybe. Possibly nothing but indiscretion. Harry Jennings is an impossible sort of fellow. Disagreeable. Can't we telephone the other paper and agree with them not to print this?'

'You know better than that, Jane,' put in Richard.

'Why, Jane, that's the best piece of news we've had in a week,' Ned Brief glanced at the clock to see how many minutes he had to go. 'I'd say three column head on that, Jim.'

'Awful. Awful.' Jane looked deeply distressed.

'We're running a newspaper,' Brief spoke as if ending all argument. 'Play it up, Jim.'

'Well, they manage things better than that in barbarous Russia,' exclaimed Dick. 'And they tell me they have no more divorces than we do.'

'We're running a newspaper, aren't we?' That settled the matter in the mind of Mr. Brief. Then he added, 'You lose friends in this game, Jane. You can't help it. A publisher can't be popular, not if he runs a real newspaper. There are lots of lies told about the Chief. There are plenty of lies told about any publisher. You've got to be prepared to be lied about, if you want to run a paper.'

Jane went home that afternoon, hesitated, suffered, and at last drove to the home of Evelyn Jennings. That indiscreet young woman, for the first time in their two lives, refused to see her. Jane went to Dr. Eskridge's home. The

house was dark. None of his family there. His wife and children hiding out, no doubt. Jane went home and took several hours to go to sleep.



The Fourth of July drew on. Ned Brief consulted Jane as to the usual arrangements, assuming they would remain the same as always. The Sentinel would give a bunch of fire-crackers to every child ten years old or older who would call for it at the Sentinel building after 10 A.M. of the third, 'bringing this coupon and presenting it'; a packet of torpedoes to younger ones, pinwheels and Roman candles or sky-rockets to others on other conditions. All the 'Sentinel family' included. All with that big-brother feeling so characteristic of the Sentinel and always a part of its references to itself. Did Jane wish to go ahead as her father used to do? 'It makes lots of friends, you know, Jane. The common people, you know. The masses.'

'Ned, is there anything better we could do for them? These are hard times. Some don't have enough to eat. Couldn't we give them food instead?'

'We could. I don't know which is better for them, a little fun or a little food; but we can do either one and not cost the paper much. All contributed, you know, or most of it, by our advertisers. They give what we want or—'

'Yes, I'm beginning to understand.' Jane spoke with a certain flatness and weariness. 'Well, let it be food this time.'

'All right, we'll organize it. The advertising staff gets the stuff from our friends.'

On the morning of the third, after the big statements in double-leads, caps and flamboyant headlines declaring the munificence of the Sentinel, lines of persons formed at day-

light and reached away in queues in both directions from the buildings, blocks long. The street in front of the office choked with milling crowds, Jane had to leave her car two blocks away and come afoot. Even at that, she had difficulty reaching the doors.

‘Ned, I never saw such people, so many old people!’ She went straight to the big front office windows to look down, Ned beside her. ‘Look at them! Boney, pale, lame, sick! It’s horrible! Look! I didn’t know such people existed outside of — of ancient histories. Many of them look famished. See that family, that boy with crooked legs, rickets, I know. And his mother, a skeleton, nothing more. Listen to the roar. Suppose that crowd got violent, imagine what they could do.’

‘That’s not the crowd that gets violent,’ replied Mr. Brief. ‘It’s the strong young hoodlums. Many of these are old. There’s no danger in that crowd.’

‘No, nothing but piteousness. My God!’

After two hours of passing out great portions of meat, with loaves of bread, the lines seemed undiminished, but the stock gave out. A carload of fresh meat, two carloads, had vanished without apparently making an impression.

‘What’ll we do?’ John Prather, now back as a solicitor in the display end of the paper, hot and excited, had just finished explaining the situation to Ned Brief, as Jane listened.

‘Why are you caught short like this?’ demanded Brief.

‘We wouldn’t have been short, only you said not to spend any more money. The packers won’t contribute more. I can’t get a pound more meat from them. There’s a line a block long waiting. We’ll have to turn them away.’

‘Get another carload of meat and pay for it,’ said Jane.

‘Do you know what that will cost?’ asked Ned Brief.

‘No matter. Get it.’ Jane turned away, as she spoke, and John Prather waited for no further orders but seized a telephone and demanded the immediate delivery of the meat. Nobody went away unsatisfied from the *Sentinel* office.

* * *

Two days later occurred the first sharp disagreement between Jane and Richard. Dick mentioned at breakfast the July dividends of the steel, oil, and coal businesses, not large but better than those of most companies in the same lines. He felt that the depression demanded that these dividends be prorated according to the length of service among the old workers in the business who now had no employment.

‘What, you mean just to give them so much money?’

‘Surely, why not? You gave away plenty of money in the form of meat.’

‘That’s different. The *Sentinel* did it and will get a huge return in good will. Father would have approved of that as good business,’ Jane answered across the breakfast table.

‘You mean to say you’re going to adopt Dad’s ethics, spending money on the poor for ultimate profit?’

‘Surely. Why not? That’s what business does for the world; it helps everybody.’

‘You would then keep up the present capitalistic régime? Do business in the same old ways?’

‘Certainly. Why not?’ Jane arose from the table and Richard followed her into the library. They both left the little iron-gray mother at the table, utterly bewildered as to the cause of the difference between them. They stood near the piano, on the same spot where thirteen years before William Bronze had told Christopher Weld how hopeless was his suit for the hand of Jane and ordered him off the place

never to return. A very different Jane now stood there, firm lines about her mouth, as she returned the inquiring gaze of her brother; and a very different Richard confronted her. No longer the gay, debonair youth who pursued Penelope Weld in that far-off summer and surprised her dancing in the light of dawn, but a serious faced man of middle years, round whose temples gray hairs began to show among the reddish blond ones. Now for the first time a serious rift began to appear between him and his sister. Just when Richard had begun to think himself free from the hand of his father, he found Jane's mind running in the channels of the old Chief's mind and her business ideas apparently inherited direct from William Bronze. Thus the dead hand of Big Bill reached out from the crypt of his mausoleum and rested again upon the head of his son, yes, and his daughter, dwarfing, warping, twisting both of them. Not even death itself could relax the hold of that firm old hand upon the lives of those closest to him.

‘Jane, I can't understand your mental attitude. I thought you would shake free from Dad's influence and would shape your ideas of doing business for yourself.’

‘I am learning to shape them for myself. Dad was a great business man. He did business on the principles it has followed for a thousand years. If that was good enough for him, it's good enough for us.’

‘It's out of date, Jane.’ Richard seemed aghast at this new obstacle which had arisen in the path he hoped to tread toward a new day and a new deal. ‘The new deal in this country is putting the old methods and old principles into the discard.’

‘They'll not stay there long. They'll emerge. Human nature is not made over in a night, nor in a summer. You'll see.’

‘What do you intend to do with the paper? It’s now standing behind the new deal.’

‘Yes. We’ll keep it there as long as things prosper. Ned Brief and I feel the same way about it. But when there is a turn in the tide, or when those professors at Washington and their brain-trust go too far, we’ll be ready to swing round into the opposition. We’ve not gone so far we can’t come back. The honeymoon’s still on and we’ll not disturb it, but Ned and I are not innocent enough to believe it can last forever.’

‘Then you don’t believe at all in the new social ideals — that business should be conducted for the good of the masses, and that capitalism must serve the workers and the common crowd if it is to survive at all?’

‘Yes, I do believe that. I think capitalism has already served and is serving the greatest good of the greatest number. I believe wealth naturally flows into the hands of the strong and able, and their management of it benefits the masses who haven’t the brains and strength to handle it for themselves.’

‘The old aristocratic view, the Hamiltonian idea! Jane, I didn’t believe you’d hold to that.’

‘I don’t know anything about Hamilton, but I know about William Bronze and I’m following him.’

‘Why, Jane, I thought he’d done enough to you — ruined your life.’

‘Once I thought he had. I’m not so sure now. It may have been the best thing for me in the long run. Anyway he’s given me a big job to do if I want to — a career. After all I have seen of married life, its failures, its terrible responsibilities, its grief over sick children and dead children, I’m not sure he didn’t do the best thing for me in keeping me out of it. Anyway I’ve got a great job, and I intend to

fill it the way he'd like for me to. A love affair is the red-hot iron that burns you, and a career is the balm that cures the wound.'

'My God!' Richard exclaimed in an awe-struck whisper. 'Dad come alive again! And in you! And you'd hinder the revolution!'

'I don't want any revolution, Richard. Do you?'

'Well, I mean the growth, the bloodless evolution of the new deal. The new socialized state. The gradual development of the new social structure.'

'I don't want any socialism in mine. I don't believe it will work. Not in this country. I'm for capitalism. It has always worked since the beginning of civilization, and before. The first trading between shepherds and hunters founded capitalism. There never has been a socialistic state, a communism, that has succeeded.'

'What about Russia? And the Mormons?'

'Yes. What about Russia? Who knows anything about it? We don't. Murdering people. Starving their children.'

'It has stood as a state for sixteen years. That's something.'

'If you're so crazy about Russia,' a hard flinty note came into Jane's voice, 'why don't you go over there and see for yourself?'

'I may have to.' Dejection showed in the tones of Richard Bronze, almost desperation.



Jane came up Center Street in her coupé on the way home to lunch. Often she went to the Seminole Club for her mid-day meal nowadays, taking Ned Brief with her or even the lanky Jim Gardner. Usually, however, these gentlemen, tied by their jobs in the busy noon hours, could find little

leisure. Then Jane took a solitary lunch at home, because her mother did not count. Now on this hot day she saw Penelope Weld walking rather briskly in the sun, for there was no shady side to Center Street at that hour. Jane saw Penelope often enough these days but, if their eyes met, seldom did more than wave. Today, however, she drew up to the curb and hailed Penny, saying:

‘Where are you going?’

‘Over to Murcheson’s for lunch where there’s a bit of music. I get so tired of our own tea-room at Swann’s day after day. Same old faces. Same old food. Though our cuisine, you know, is unsurpassed!’ Penny laughed a little as she advertised.

‘Come home with me. I’ll get you back.’

‘I have only forty-five minutes, Jane.’

‘Very well. Everything will be ready when we get there. I haven’t seen you for ages. Climb in!’

‘I’ll just go you. You’re awfully good, Jane, to a business—ah, spinster.’

‘You can’t call yourself a spinster yet. You look twenty.’ Jane regarded her with evident admiration, as Penny sat back on the cushions and breathed a sigh of gratitude for the shade.

‘I’m getting on, Jane.’

‘Not keeping up with me, though. Now I can talk about spinsterhood! But I’m beginning not to care. Fact, rather proud about it. Got a job, you know.’

‘A job, Jane? What do you mean?’

‘Why, I’m office-boy to the editor of the *Sentinel*.’

‘Now don’t talk nonsense.’

‘No, I mean it. I’m learning the game from Ned Brief. Maybe some day I’ll run the old rag.’

‘Good for you, Jane. That’s splendid. But what about—’ Penny stopped.

‘Richard? Oh, he doesn’t take to the paper. He’s looking after the mills and mines and such.’

When they arrived at the mansion on Hunter’s Hill, Penny entered with a shiver. The last time she had passed through that door was on the day of William Bronze’s funeral; and the last time she came out of it, she had ridden away with Richard and had told him so that he could not fail to understand how hopeless was his love for her. To-day Penny had half feared she might meet Richard at the Bronze palace, though Jane soon reassured her by saying they would remain entirely alone. As it developed, even Mrs. Bronze had remained upstairs. When Jane had explained to Penny her place on the newspaper, her ideas of policy and her zest in her new plaything, and had inquired for Peter Weld and about Penny’s affairs, she reverted to Richard and said:

‘I didn’t bring you here to talk about Dick, Penny dear. Never thought of such a thing. But now that you’re here—well, he told me, of course. I’m awfully sorry, Penny. I—I hope that—that the unfortunate outcome between Chris and me had nothing to do with you and Dick. And I hope that you and I can always be the same. I’m so fond of you, Penny. And can’t Dick and you and I always be the same good friends?’

‘Oh, yes, I do hope so!’ Penny spoke in a low soft voice, as if embarrassed, and yet with unmistakable conviction. Jane continued:

‘Dick and I—well, our views differ a little about business affairs.’

Penny waited, dreading what she was about to hear and

half guessing it in advance. She knew the conservative side to Jane's nature; she knew that women as a rule tend more to conservatism than men. She realized that this tendency stood partly responsible for Jane's inability to break loose and run away with Chris. Although shocked at Jane's next words, Penny was not surprised.

'It doesn't amount to much and it will come out all right in the long run, but Dick has some of these foolish socialistic views in his head, an inheritance from his college course. He wants to divide up our dividends among our old employees that we had to let go. I feel the dividends should be kept intact to run the business successfully when we can set these old workers to work again. Business is improving. The unemployed can weather along some way. But we've simply got to have the means to set our mills and mines and oil wells going full blast when the time comes. I feel that we're responsible to society. Now Dick doesn't see that. But I think he will.'

Jane's opening sentence in her little economic discussion struck dismay into the heart of Penny, 'It doesn't amount to much.' Was it possible that Jane could not recognize the dynamite in this subject, so far as Richard was concerned? Did she not know how deep-seated her brother's convictions, the results of years of study, of Peter Weld's thought and talk, perhaps of love for herself, Penny Weld? Did Jane not consider that all the thwarted romance in Richard's world would now probably pour itself into his social idealism — that all his once gay energy and verve would naturally grow into a sort of sad enthusiasm, possibly even fanaticism, for social reform? Probably Jane did not consider these things, for Penny herself really considered them now for the first time. 'It doesn't amount to much.' Ah, but it did. Of that Penny felt fully aware; but even she did not know

how much it did amount to, and what a devastating part this apparently little difference was to play in the relations of brother and sister and in the ultimate fate of Richard Bronze.

Penny now allowed herself to say, 'I'm not sure that Richard will change.'

'He'll have to change.' Jane spoke with finality. 'He doesn't yet realize his responsibilities. All the weight of the business now rests on him. Of course we're all three the executors of the will, Mother, Richard, and I; but Richard is the man. He will awake to his responsibilities in a short time, and responsibility sobers a man. He will find how utterly impossible it is to carry on successful business in any such harebrained fashion as his socialism would require. He must manage everything but the paper, which he has handed over to me.'

'And you'll run it for—for profit?' Penny ventured the inquiry.

'Yes and no. I'll see that it continues to earn as father always made it do. I'll follow his policies which were successful. But I hope it will serve the public good, just as it has always done.'

Penny heard these words with some astonishment. She knew, through Peter Weld, the unscrupulous hardness which lay back of the *Sentinel*'s history, yes, back of most newspaper history. She knew something from her brother Chris of the blackmail and the piracy in which the *Sentinel* had engaged under William Bronze. She wondered if the same highwayman's methods would characterize it under Jane. She could not believe it. No, Jane simply did not yet understand. Nevertheless, Penny understood that the old harsh methods of conventional competitive business Jane would carry along with her, tempered by spectacular charities like

her father's and the 'Big Brother' stuff that had always accompanied the piratical path of the Sentinel. Penny's heart sank at the change she saw taking place in her friend. Or was it a change? Perhaps only a coming of age, a natural development from her antecedents, her inheritance from her father and her environment.

Penny asked the privilege of running upstairs to greet Mrs. Bronze. Then she came down again and Jane delivered her at Swann's at the appointed hour, a saddened Penny, full of foreboding for the future of her friend.

* * *

Penny now looked forward eagerly to Richard's next call at the little bungalow. She knew he could come soon. Not infrequently he dropped in of evenings, talked for an hour with her and Peter, did not seek to be alone with her, tried bravely to keep up his old gayety of demeanor, and yet allowed himself to look at her with a mute hopelessness when he thought himself unobserved. Penny had asked him twice if he thought it wise of him to keep coming. He had only asked, 'Does it annoy you?' And when she replied, 'No, of course not. I'm only thinking of you, Dick, and what's best for you; you know I'm fond of you,' he said, with a smile meant to be light and bright, 'I'll keep coming, if you don't mind.' Perhaps hope still burned with a low and quiet flame in his heart.

He came the night after Penny had taken luncheon with Jane. As soon as she saw Richard coming, Penny asked Peter to leave them alone. In the night quiet, on the little front porch, Penny went swiftly to the heart of her trouble about Jane and Dick, asking him for his side of the matter and telling him frankly what Jane had said.

'Yes,' said Dick, 'that is exactly so. It seems to her a

small enough matter. To me it is everything in life. Unless—'

‘Unless what, Dick?’

‘Unless I had you. If I had you, I should not care so much. I might adapt myself to almost anything. I could drop into the ordinary ways of doing business.’

‘Lose your ideals, Dick?’

‘Well, be content.’

‘Failing that, what will you do?’

‘I’m thinking seriously of leaving, Penny. I shall stick around, as long as I can keep on hoping—’

‘But you can’t, Dick dear.’

‘I know, you say that. And you think that. But sometimes girls marry men to get rid of them. I’ve been loving you so long. I can’t help keeping on. Of course, if you married some one else, that would be final, but until then, no matter what you tell me, I’ll be in reach. If you should marry—’

‘Then what, Dick?’

‘I think I’d go to Russia.’

‘To Russia?’

‘Yes. There they are trying out my ideals, anyway. I could watch the experiment. Maybe be of some use. Manufacture something for them. Get a concession for a factory of some kind. I hear they need all sorts of things. I think, with the money I could take along, I could get a concession, build a factory, make shoes, safety-pins, pencils, knives and forks, oh, anything. At least, I could translate or teach English, as soon as I’d learned a little Russian.’

‘Would they let you into the country?’

‘They’ve let lots of others in. They’ve employed a great many American experts of one sort and another.’

‘But Richard, they don’t need you nearly so much as

you're needed in this country, to help in our present revolution. The soviets are off and gone. We are just beginning to work a little bit at socialism, and you hardly dare use the word socialism in this country. Why don't you stay here and try to work out your ideas in your own country?'

'What chance have I? What chance has anybody in my position? Here I am checked at the very beginning by my own sister. I can't do anything important without her consent, and mother's. They will do nothing to jeopardize our property interests. Jane's ideas are the old-line ones—capitalism pure and simple.'

'Surely you wouldn't give up everything, all your family interests, your position, your opportunities, and go off over to the other side of the earth?'

'What would it all mean to me, if I didn't have you? You are the only one who could hold me here. I wouldn't care for anything at all if I finally and completely lost you. I'd just as well be in India or China—'

'Oh, don't say China! Makes me think of—'

'I know. I know. Forgive me. But it would be odd if my father alive drove your brother out of the country to die, and dead drove me out, too. I sometimes wish another war would break out. If there were a good war, I'd go to it.'

'Hush, Dick. Socialists don't believe in wars.'

'No more do I, not really. Only—I'm desperate, Penny! If there were a good bloody revolution, I'd surely go to it and help.'

'Stay here and help the bloodless one. That's far better.'

'You mean help draw up codes of ethics for steel, oil, coal?'

'Yes. They're all co-operating.'

'I haven't much faith in the continuance of co-operation.'

'Help make it continue.'

‘Does Peter Weld think it’s really going to amount to something?’

‘Surely he does. He thinks America is rapidly gaining education in co-operation, the elimination of competition, the elements of a really social state.’

‘I hope he’s right.’ Richard spoke doubtfully. Evidently his mood, affected by his personal condition, inclined toward pessimism. He looked at the floor of the porch, and avoided Penny’s eyes even in the dim light. ‘If he’s not right, and — if other things don’t shape up better, I’ll want to get away from here. But how can I?’

‘You can’t, Dick. Stay here. Shoulder your load. Help make the new state. Everybody’s handicapped in his work. You can do a great deal in spite of handicaps.’

‘Do you want me to stay, Penny?’ Dick suddenly looked searchingly into her face and made his tone intense.

‘Of course,’ she answered with evident caution. ‘One does not like to lose an old friend. Seminole is your home, Dick. All your associations are here, and your relationships, and your interests. You can make your life count. You can influence Jane and work with her.’

‘I’m not sure I can, Penny. You don’t know Jane. She’s a very strong person. She has more of Dad in her than I have. When once she makes up her mind, she’s immovable.’

‘Then why didn’t she run away with Chris?’

‘She was too young then, unformed, not developed to her present strength.’

‘Yes, I can see that,’ replied Penny, ‘but just think, if only she had gone away with Chris, or if only Chris had waited a few years until she grew up and got strong enough to go to him or with him, all our lives might have been different. I—I might have loved you, Dick. I think I would have. But that night your father made Chris go and told him

never to come back made all the difference in all our lives. Oh, it's too bad!"

"Yes. I—I could curse him; but Jane—now she worships his memory."

"And nothing will change her?"

"No. Nothing will change her. Oh, Penny—" Dick dropped his head on his hands, elbows on knees, a picture of suffering. Penny reached out her hand and all but placed it on his bowed head, but he never knew. If only that hand had touched his head, the whole of both their lives might have changed. Penny seemed to know it and refrained.

* *

That night Penny kept her father up late pouring out to him her anguish of heart concerning Jane and Richard. Particularly toward Dick her pity flowed; and Peter Weld regarded her closely to see if her pity might not easily turn to love. But so frankly she showed Peter her heart that the thought soon vanished from his mind.

"Couldn't you do something with Jane, Daddy?" Penny thought Peter could work miracles in changing the minds of human beings. Peter looked at the library rug, with its old Bokhara colors of ivory and red, and shook his head.

"I don't think so, Penny. She's a mature woman and a woman of her own mind. I don't think anyone could change her, unless she fell in love with some man strong enough to dominate her, which is not likely. If Jane marries at all now, it must be to some man who will bend to her will. Not enough strong middle-aged men eligible, and she'd never marry an elderly man."

Penny marvelled at the quickness with which Peter grasped the whole situation and surveyed all possibilities. She said:

‘But, father, how do you account for her reactionary tendency?’

‘Perfectly natural, dear. Whenever a woman falls heir to property and responsibility, she becomes more conservative than most men in similar circumstances. It’s a natural timidity. Furthermore, girls most often inherit traits from their fathers, and boys from their mothers. Jane inherits from her father, even though he was only her step-father. It’s more mental than biological.’

‘Do I inherit from you, Peter?’

‘I think that is rather evident, Penny dear. And it makes me a very proud old man.’

‘Can’t see your grounds for pride. I have the right to be proud. But Chris was like you, too?’

‘In some ways, but in more ways like your mother. Yes, Jane is her step-father’s own daughter, and it would be rather amazing if she did not follow his views and actions.’

‘You think, then, she’ll become as unscrupulous as he?’

‘I don’t look for that, no. Being a woman, there’ll be more milk of human kindness, but if she keeps on at the paper, she’ll grow into a fearless fighter. In some respects more fearless than Bill, if that were possible.’

‘And poor Dick! What will happen to Dick?’

‘If he had more of his father in him, I’d expect to see him leave, maybe go to Russia. Though any convinced socialist might well hesitate to leave this country just now, when everything shows so much promise. No, I don’t believe he will go far enough to leave the country. It would not be astonishing, however, to see him remove to Chicago or New York and operate the family enterprises from there, perhaps expand them. I don’t believe he will remain here after you marry, Penny.’

Peter looked closely at her as he made this assertion. Penny made no falsely modest denial of the probability of her marriage. Both had always taken for granted that she would marry when just the right man came along, and neither had any real doubt that he would come. Peter at the moment still carried the faint remains of an idea that Richard might still turn out to be that man. Penny put the finishing touches to the idea, however, in her next words:

‘I wish it could be Richard. I honestly wish I could love him in that way, but I don’t and never can. And I’d not like to become embroiled with Jane in family differences, as I’d be sure to do if I married Dick. No, it grows more and more impossible all the time. I love Jane, too, and always want her friendship. I couldn’t have it if I were in the family. We’d quarrel over capitalism and socialism. I’d take Dick’s side, and I’d go further even than Dick. That would certainly mess things up worse than they are now. But Peter, Peter Weld, won’t you please talk to Jane? Maybe you could do something.’

‘Certainly I’ll talk to her, if she gives me a chance; but with little hope of affecting her permanently. There are too many other forces operating on her all the time pulling her the other way. But I will if she gives me a chance.’

‘If she gives you a chance? Can’t you make a chance? Go to her office? Make an appointment?’

‘No, Penny darling. I don’t think I could do that. But she’ll be dropping in here sometime, as she has always done. Not long since she and Richard were here together, is it? How long?’

‘Oh, ten days or—’

‘No, a week ago yesterday,’ said Peter.

‘You’re right, Daddy.’

‘I’ll try to let the subject come up, but I doubt if she will talk to me about it, or hold an open mind, if she does.’

* *

They came, two evenings later, Jane and Richard, in her coupé. Jane had made the suggestion that they come. Richard eagerly agreed. He preferred, of course, to see Penny alone, and yet always when he could he wished to see Penny. Father and daughter sat together over evening papers and current magazines, indoors, beneath the big red and brown shade of the library lamp.

‘How good of you, Jane,’ said Penny, genuinely glad in countenance.

‘Good to ourselves,’ said Richard.

‘Yes,’ added Jane.

‘Good to see the editor of the *Sentinel*,’ Peter Weld used a little banter.

‘Not yet. Not at all. Maybe never,’ Jane replied.

‘Enjoying it?’ inquired Peter.

‘Never enjoyed anything so much.’

‘She’s ‘gradually getting hold,’ said Dick. ‘It will not be long now until she will swim by herself.’

‘Nobody can do that,’ said Peter. ‘Nobody can be great without a kitchen cabinet.’

Jane looked closely at him and pondered this remark. She soon grasped the significance of it and answered:

‘Could I enlist you as a member?’

‘So long as your administration follows its present policy, yes.’ Bold frankness and a query appeared in the words.

‘Then you’re elected for the time being and maybe permanently.’

‘Good,’ agreed Peter. ‘I take it you will welcome progress, social reconstruction, the socialized state?’

‘Within limits. I am not just sure what those words mean. They’re so familiar to you professors and experts. I haven’t found my way through them.’ Jane regarded him thoughtfully and with an apparently open mind.

‘They may not mean much all at once,’ said Peter. ‘For the present indeed, they seem to mean only a restoration of good times, employment, prosperity, recovery. At least that is what the public means by them and expects from them. The leaders too, for the most part. But logically they mean a greater amount of socialization than this country has ever dreamed of before, or would be willing to dream of now. That’s the final outcome of the policy we’ve embarked on. England’s going that way; so are we.’

‘Do you think it wise to go that way? I don’t,’ said Jane.

‘Yes, I think it’s the way to go, Jane,’ said Peter. ‘And whether it’s wise or not is not the question. We are driven by forces beyond our control. We can only surrender to those forces, social and economic, and help them along. You are in position to help tremendously, if you want to.’

Penny and Dick silently and with intense interest listened to the colloquy. They both realized how much hung upon the outcome. If Jane could yield to the influence of the old sage, Richard could join forces with her, remain at home, work out his aspiration. If she could not, Richard would find himself adrift, working at cross-purposes with his sister, unable to stir hand or foot in the direction of his ideals. It seemed to both Penny and Dick a contest between the most enlightened views of their time and the natural conservatism of the mass, the managers of business, the old established ways and manners of the republic, between the new day and the forces of inertia which held back its dawning and development. Which would win?

‘I want to help bring back prosperity, give employment

to those now idle, and make this country what it used to be.' Jane spoke with intensity, conviction, honesty. 'We had no business in the world war, as I see it now, no business mixing up in the quarrels of Europe; and we ought now to be sticking to our own affairs and let the rest of the world alone.'

'If we could.' Peter looked discouraged at this display of the old isolationist manner. 'Times have changed, my dear; the world has grown very small.' Bravely and patiently he went over the familiar ground of foreign relations and domestic change; but evidently with only half a heart. Jane listened courteously, but showed little tendency to alter the position she had taken up. Like a true newspaper publisher, she gave voice to the opinions of the crowd, declared the policies of the mass of the American people.

At last Jane arose, thanked Peter for his kindness and patience, and moved toward the door. Penny followed, her hands clinging to Jane's arm as if to hold her back, to influence her steps, to change her will. Richard stood looking at the floor, dejection written visibly on his face. Peter stood in the light of the library lamp, his white hair illumined by it, his ruddy face softened with the melancholy and the long patience of the wise who know that they cannot move the world and the minds of men in a hurry, that change can come only with the utmost reluctance, that apparent defeat has befallen every upward and forward urge of the world since history began, that only the grinding of ages in the mills of time can bring bread to all the needy in the world. Peter glanced at Richard, the most affected personally of all the four in that room by the results of the evening's discussion. Peter sighed, sank into his chair and, in turn, looked down at the rug.

Happy

Hapwood Powers entered the criminal courtroom. He had ten minutes time to spare, which he occupied arranging papers and books to his satisfaction. He ran his hands through his heavy dark-brown hair, not consciously to disarrange it but with that effect. He wore no waistcoat, but in addition to his belt, braces, which he and all his part of the country called suspenders, not to hold up his trousers, for his waist remained slender enough and his hip bones prominent enough to serve, but to impress the jury as a man of the people. Big but slender, six feet and an inch, big boned and muscular, he would thrust his thumbs through his 'galluses,' and even from time to time flap them against his ribs; so he met with approval from the box in which sat the men who would dispense justice, more or less alloyed, in this government of, for and by the people.

This is not to say that Hapwood Powers gave great thought to setting a stage and costuming it, but it is to say that in working hours he dressed for his role of defender, just as a mechanic dresses for his oily job, or a pilot for his flying. Working hours over, which often did not happen in the experience of this active and increasingly popular attorney for days at a time, he paid as much attention as another to his blue chin after a close shave, his shirts, ties, well-pressed trousers and whitened sport shoes and all the rest of the small things that go to make up a meticulous dresser. In courtroom his appearance went well with his job of sledge-hammer swinger. After hours, whenever

he got them, he looked the part of a young man about town, a very big young man in every sense of the adjective. Men had begun to reckon with Hapwood Powers; men began to point at him as he passed on the street or in club rooms and whisper behind their hands; and men began to seek him out and lean upon him.

He bore the reputation of a hard-fighting lawyer, caustic, sarcastic, cynical, satirical, with knowledge and brains enough to know when to sneer at existing American institutions and tendencies and when to laud them and wave the stars and stripes. Not that Hapwood really was insincere, but that he possessed the histrionic powers necessary to anyone who tries to speak on a public platform. He could growl gutturally when growling seemed called for; he could sneer nasally at abuses when the nasal twang appeared to be indicated. He could bellow when he judged the jury sufficiently bucolic to respond to the bull-like roars and detonations that groundlings prefer; he could assume dignity, scholarly polish, when the twelfth man looked bookish, or even magazinish. In short, he knew how to be all things to all men and to take them with guile. Hapwood had developed grand powers as a popular orator and fighting man.

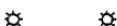
He took cases regardless of retainers or fees whenever there seemed need to keep men out of prison who in his opinion ought not to go there, and sometimes even when they ought. On general principles, he opposed and hated prisons, believing that society and the System made most criminals. He went on the basic resolve, 'I will keep a man out of jail any time I can, in any way I can.' He therefore earned a name for a certain measure of unscrupulousness, and doubtless deserved the name. He bluffed, cajoled, deceived, over-emphasized or slurred over evidence, and many times it was whispered that he would not hesitate to

‘reach’ a juryman whenever he felt he could be reached, to tamper whenever tampering would further his end. Somehow, he never seemed greatly to suffer in public esteem from these surmises, so easy-going the American people or so distrustful of their own institutions. ‘A terrible thing to fall into the hands of the courts on any ground whatever,’ said Happy, and shaped his actions accordingly.

The judge appeared, and the audience in the court, which filled the room, arose. The jury filed in. Hapwood regarded each one thoughtfully until the seventh man to enter brought a suggestion of a smile to the corners of his severe mouth. This seventh juror — too old, if he had cared to claim exemption — carried his white head bowed forward upon a broad, square chest. Seventy-five, that was his age, as stated by himself. Peter Weld believed it his duty to serve on juries when summoned, and never to claim exemption without adequate cause. Juries so often erred. What little he could do to hold them level and sane, he would do, no matter the inconvenience. His plain duty as a citizen; every man’s plain duty. Hapwood had done some things rather near to dissimulation when he questioned Peter Weld about prejudices in this case. The opposing counsel thought Powers on the point of rejecting the old gentleman half a dozen times, in fact showed some surprise when at last, with a show of hesitation, he allowed Peter Weld to remain on the jury. One real friend in court, of that Happy could rest assured.

The prisoner took his place between two deputies. The clerk read the charges, manslaughter, punishable with twenty years at most in the penitentiary. The prisoner looked more like Uncle Sam without whiskers than a killer. Had Christopher Weld lived and stood in that courtroom, he would have recognized the corner groceryman, who

thirteen years ago, on the night of Harding's election, complained of the Sentinel coal business and the chain stores which rapidly were pushing him to the wall. The face of the prisoner, now referred to as Andrew Cadwallader, showed the advance of years and the struggles against forces too great and too mysterious for him. A perplexed frown, shaped like a harrow, rested its point between his eyes, and rayed upward and outward across his forehead, cut by horizontal lines which testified to habitual nervous strain. The shoulders now stooped which in Chris's time had spread out square and strong.



The case against the groceryman sounded common enough. He had resisted the attempts of a bank to foreclose on his corner grocery, had resisted to the point of assault upon the agent of his bankers, had put the agent to sleep on the floor between the counters of the little store by a punch to the jaw; and the agent, being an apoplectic gentleman, not accustomed to taking it on the chin, had not arisen at the count of ten nor of ten thousand; in fact, had not, up to the day of the trial, taken the trouble to arise at all.

The complication behind the crime did not appear in the charge; but trust Hapwood Powers, in the course of the trial, to bring it out, and bring it out he did. He thumbed every string of prejudice in the hearts of those jurors and of the audience that filled the court. Cool, soft-voiced, at times drawling, and often sneering at the wheels within wheels in our marvellous social and business structure, our interlocking directorates, our concentration of wealth and privilege into the hands of a few, a very few, Mr. Powers questioned and cross-questioned witnesses, argued, objected, read into the record insinuations and open charges against

combinations in restraint of trade, against the existing abuses in American business life, and appeals for a sorely needed new deal, which gradually, inch by inch, won his way alike with spectators and jurors.

It seems that said Andrew Cadwallader had for twenty years done his banking with and got his credit from the Central National Bank and Trust Company. He had followed the advice of his banker, in the days of his modest prosperity, and invested in securities recommended as gilt-edged, safe as the Bank of England, which is another name for the Rock of Gibraltar. In days of depression, he had put up these same securities as collateral for a loan to keep his little front doors open. Then came the Independent Grocers' Co-operative Combine which sought to entice Cadwallader to join it—for a consideration. His judgment told him to stay out. Then the Combine sought to force him into the Chain slavery which he had long abhorred. One hydraulic pressure after another it brought to bear upon the tough and agile form of Andy Cadwallader. He resisted, he squirmed out from under, until the interlocking directorate got a hammer-lock round his neck.

The board of the Combine tied itself into other boards, among them the board of the Central Bank and Trust Company, which for a score of years had stood in the place of Andy's mentor and friend, his sanhedrin, his calendar of saints, his bishop, cardinal, pope and Bible. To Andrew the Bank could do no wrong, think no evil. But his securities, his collateral, shrank in value to the vanishing point. The Bank demanded that Andy place a mortgage on his little store, with his home upstairs above it. Then the fatal day came, during the moratorium, when Andrew's paper fell due, and he could not meet it. He never dreamed but that his beloved and revered bank would carry him over

the time of danger. It did not. On the board of the bank sat a member of the board of the Combine. In fact, the vice-president of the bank in charge of land mortgages, Mr. Ezra Ounce, held a directorate in the grocers' combine. 'Now we have Cadwallader on the hip,' said Mr. Ounce, the interlocked link between board and board. 'He'll come into the Combine or get the life squeezed out of him.' The bank foreclosed on the long, lean, perplexed Andrew Cadwallader. His universe, including all his social and business gods, came crashing over his devoted head.

'Let them come and put me out,' said Andy Cadwallader over and over again in his bewilderment and skepticism and sleeplessness for ten weary and restless days and nights. They came. In the person of red-faced and red-headed Mr. Ezra Ounce, interlocking director, they came. He came to cry the sale. The allied power of bank and grocery combine came. Andy Cadwallader, like a bull stuck in the neck with banderillas, delivered his foolish and desperate sock on the jaw under the lower incisors of Mr. Ounce, who fell, bounced, and lay still forever. Such was the all-too-common trap into which a simple, trusting, ignorant, bull-headed tradesman had walked and got pinched; and such the apparently inextricable entanglement from which Mr. Hapwood Powers had set to work to rescue the lost.

Happy had his job laid out. He expected little if any compensation; but the case so clearly illuminated the terrain of the New Deal that the dark-haired and dark-browed young warrior, apparently anything but a happy warrior, bent all his brain and brute force into his battle for a man's and a nation's freedom. The trial under his skilful and relentless pressure became a contest circling not merely round one man, but round all the small tradesmen of America, against all the investment bankers of the country, and in be-

half of the governmental attempt to divorce commercial bankers from investment bankers. The administration at Washington had just been engaged in investigating the biggest investment bankers in the country, had unearthed their legal but immoral favoritism in behalf of certain influential clients, had laid its lines to force investment bankers into the kind of seats they ought to occupy, brokers' seats—and to preserve the position of commercial bankers as keepers of the public purse, set for the safeguarding of every little depositor.

Patiently over and over again, without making the mistake of proving his case twice, Hapwood Powers instructed his jury and the spectators, and even the judge, line upon line, like a school-master drilling a class, in the clear distinction between commercial banking and investment banking. He illustrated repeatedly by the case of the Faeth National Bank which advertised on every bit of printed matter that went out from it, even to stationery, 'We sell no stocks and bonds.' He insisted that that was the province of a true bank. Furthermore, he got into the record the implication that the state should guarantee the deposits, particularly of small depositors, against loss, and should protect and carry tradesmen, particularly small ones, as long as they showed promise of survival and evidence of integrity. And never once did he neglect opportunity to gird and jibe and jeer at the Fifty-three who hitherto had ruled and owned, body and soul, the tradesmen, farmers, and workers of the American republic.

Penelope Weld came into the courtroom at five o'clock on the third day of the trial. Uneasy about her father, who for three days and nights had been shut up with the jury, with no opportunity for rest and exercise except a short twilight walk each day, and impatient with him for his quixotic de-

votion to his duty as a citizen in these hot days of early July, she slipped into a back seat and scanned with anxiety the ruddy white-crowned face. She found nothing to disquiet her. He caught her eye, smiled and acknowledged her wave of a white-gloved hand, then turned his intent and quietly jubilant attention to the lawyer making the final argument for the defense. Quickly the familiarity of the voice and figure of the speaker dawned upon the astonished comprehension of Penny Weld. The musical bass beat upon her ears like the lowest tones of a 'cello. She felt a thrill and a cold chill as on the day when thirteen years ago her girlish ear first heard that voice, and her girlish cheek had been brushed by the lips now speaking.

'To think, I have never heard him speak before. How quiet he is, dispassionate, calm.' Wait, Penny. He'll grow vibrant enough, by and by, passionate enough, with years of accumulated hatred against things as they are, the ruthlessness and the cruelty of business and business men, shaking that tall strong frame like a storm. You'll hear something, Penny. You'll hear a man who has trained himself patiently, unremittingly, every word, every intonation, every movement, for a dozen years, in the most delicate art to which a human being can devote voice and personality, the persuasion of his fellow men. You'll see a consummate actor, sincere to the smallest nerves in finger-tips and toes, playing a part from the bottom of his heart, the part, romantic Penny Weld, of a Coeur-de-Lion against the Saracens. You'll see a feeble single citizen standing almost alone against the abuses of his timid time, against an embattled plutocracy, against century-old privilege, against ingrained Hamiltonianism; you'll hear him blowing a trumpet to summon up the hosts of ignorant and lethargic masses. You'll see the rare sight of an occasion, a theme and a man com-

bining to produce great human speech. You'll see and hear the result.

She did see, and she did hear. She stayed dinnerless to the end, stayed through the closing argument of the prosecution, stayed as the jury filed out to take their vote, stayed while the Court and the attorneys drifted away to get an evening meal, stayed unobserved in her rear seat and watched Hapwood Powers pass down the further aisle, after one wipe of a big bandanna handkerchief—stage prop?—across a perspiring face. She stayed for an hour, two hours, in a deep brown study, looking out of a window of the hot courtroom at a sky filled with stars like spangles on a circus equestrienne's gown. She felt no hunger, unless it be a hunger of the heart. She thought that all the ache inside of her grew out of solicitude for her father. It did not. It came from perplexity that Hapwood Powers had kept his friendship away from her for so many years, that evidently he disapproved of her, that his mind so centered upon his battle with the bourgeoisie included her, in a way, in that hated class. He yielded her so willingly to Richard Bronze that winter night when both came to Swann's after her. Was he relieved? No doubt. She had gone as far as she dared, very far, she thought, in telling him that evening that she would much rather have gone with him. He did not believe her, or if he did, felt that only for this one evening, and for the sake of variety, would she have preferred to go with him. Clearly he bracketed her with Dick Bronze and his alien world. So clear and active that brain of Hapwood's in some ways; so obtuse in others.

She remembered, too, how she had seen him at St. Jude's the day of William Bronze's funeral. He stood just outside the huge gothic arch of the doorway as she and Peter, in the

mourning party, passed by. She remembered the flush of uneasiness that had burned her face at the thought that he, with all others, would include her in the Bronze family—he, above all others. Now more than ever, no doubt, he had yielded her in his mind to Richard. She could not blame him. She could not blame herself either, nor Peter Weld. A tangled up world. You couldn't do what you knew to be fair and right and kindly without bringing down upon yourself consequences, entanglements, misunderstandings which you did not desire. How overcome them? Perhaps now, at last, a chance had come. She wished only to indicate to Hapwood Powers that she did not belong to the Bronze tribe. Assuredly she wished for nothing more. Not that she cared for Happy's understanding more than another's—yes, she did. Be honest, Penny. Her father's friend. Chris's old classmate. That is really all.

She stood in the almost deserted courtroom, waiting by an open window and looking out where stars and city lights struggled for predominance. A gaunt woman, some young men and women, and three or four children huddled by another window. The Cadwallader wife and family, no doubt. Penny started to walk toward them and speak to them, to tell them her father sat on that jury and they need not be afraid. Then a shudder passed over her. Suppose Peter felt it his duty to vote for conviction? If he did, all the eleven could not shake his determination. He'd swing them over or hang the jury. She knew Peter. Then she would not wish to know the Cadwalladers after kindling false hopes in their hearts. But Peter could not do a thing like that! Peter, you stubborn old Peter, why did you get into a box like that jurybox? You're past age, ten years past age, if you'd only claim exemption. You lean over backwards in your concep-

tion of a citizen's duty. You dear old foolish, bull-headed Peter.

At last she heard a heavy step pass her, hesitate, stop, return. She did not look round into the courtroom but continued to regard the sky. She had been waiting for that step. She knew he'd come back. She willed him to come back, as she had willed his shoulder to turn round that morning so long ago when Chris went away. Classmate of Chris. He said he would adore Chris if she wanted him to, said he would adore her, and asked how would that do? He hadn't done it. He was just talking idly that day thirteen years ago to a little fifteen-year-old girl. He didn't mean it.

'Penny! What are you doing here?'

'Looking after father.'

'How long have you—been here?'

'Since five.'

'Nothing to eat?'

'Not hungry.'

'Come and let me get you something. Even a sandwich. Wait. I'll bring it here and a bottle—'

'Please don't. No. I'll wait a little while and see if they bring in a verdict, and then I'll take Daddy home.'

'If they bring in a verdict—and they will—I'll take you both home.'

'What do you think the verdict will be?'

'I think we'll win.' He spoke with calm confidence.

'Do you always?'

'Of course not. If you always won what would be the fun in—in golf?'

'Is it fun?'

'Yes. Sometimes no. Agony.'

'Was it fun this time?'

'Fun and agony, both. Did you—' He did not wish to

ask directly if she'd heard his speech. In fact, he knew she had. Too late now, she grasped what he meant, and almost whispered her reply:

'Oh, Happy. You were great! You're a grand speaker.'

He had heard those words a thousand times, but never with the leap of the heart that came to him now. Then his heart, in reaction, plunged. He must not allow himself to turn aside to this girl. Not for him. Not in his class. Not in harmony with his views and his plan of life. Strange that a daughter of Peter Weld should thus link up with the world of privilege. Yet not strange. Women had to have what they wanted when they wanted it. With a firm hand he squeezed his own heart back to its normal beat. He replied: 'The verdict will tell whether I am or not. Only one way to tell, by results.' Then he touched her arm and moved forward as he said:

'Come sit at the counsel table. No harm now. The case is in. We can't prejudice the jury by your radiant presence.'

'The counsel table! The only one I ever sat at is our dining table, with Peter Weld.'

She sat with him at the long table used by the attorneys for the defense. Twenty minutes passed as they talked, and as she watched him narrowly with penetrating eyes; and he, her. Both seemed aware that something new was taking place between them, some old walls falling down, a new friendship, new understanding developing. They each thought that this new phase came from the common interest in Peter Weld's jury; for they both thought of it as his, and that it nestled in the hollow of his hand; and so, perhaps, it did. At last a deputy came hurriedly into the room, looked significantly at Hapwood Powers, nodded his head and passed into the chambers of the judge. Soon his honor took his place on the bench; the jury filed in; the usual

colloquy passed between bench and foreman; and Peter Weld announced the verdict:

‘Not guilty.’

* * *

Although the unsuspected eloquence of an old friend had done things to Penny, the size of Hapwood’s car had something to do with the outcome. As he stood beside it, Penny laughed and said: ‘You’re as big as it.’ He offered to open the rumble and ride in it, if she would drive; but neither she nor Peter would hear to the arrangement. She therefore rode in the middle, and as none of the three was undersized, the physical contacts could not but grow intimate. From hip to ankle she rested against the driver; and as they swung round corners, she found herself pressing against him in a way that neither could avoid. Hapwood’s imagination, vivid enough at all times, ran riot with the contours, so womanly and full, that warmed every littlest nerve on his right side; and when, at last she tried to help matters by placing her left arm along the back of the seat and round his shoulders, his right biceps, no matter how he tried to avoid it, kept brushing the firm half-globe nearest to him. They both tried to carry off the trying intimacy with laughter. With anyone else, neither of them would have been so self-conscious. The fact that they both felt so keenly rather stunned them both with the self-revelation, though neither knew the other’s feelings.

It was late in the evening when Penny served the little supper for the three. She herself had had nothing to eat, and Happy and Peter only an unsatisfactory dinner in the court-house neighborhood. Therefore Penny scrambled eggs again, and smiled as she added two more to make certain. Surely, though, he could not be so hungry as upon the morn-

ing after his all night vigil on the top step of the porch. Ice tea or beer, they could take their choice. The three-point-two was enjoying its first flush of popularity. Rye bread and Rochefort or Camembert. Happy justified his name and enjoyed every minute and every crumb. His triumph in court seemed all in the day's work, but this new view of Penny, that was the exhilarating thing. He caught himself falling silent and studying her, while she burst out with all kinds of unexpected impudence toward Peter Weld, and, now and then, toward Hapwood himself, to his strange delight.

About ten o'clock came interruption and a certain disillusionment in the persons of Richard and Jane Bronze. Yes, Happy Powers, it was to be expected. You just begin to think there's a chance that Penny may not be tied up for life with this Bronze outfit and may not after all be merely awaiting a seemly moment to be married to Richard, you just begin to hope that she may still be free and fair game, when here they come, the Bronzes, at this late hour like members of the family. Hapwood tried a light and pleasant manner. No good. Deeply dignified and reserved was Happy. Well, the mourning Jane wore justified Happy's grave manner. Penny, however, ignored Jane's black gown, admirably setting off her black hair, showed all possible vivacity in bringing chairs and beer to the table and placing her new guests. Dick sprang to her help. Happy, too; but Dick proved the more agile. All the time Penny was telling of the trial, the marvellous speech of the attorney for the defense, the verdict, and the part that her Peter Weld played in the drama.

'No doubt at all, these abuses in the banking business will be straightened out, give us time,' Dick said.

'And these interlocking directorates,' added Happy.

'I see your paper is backing the new program vigorously

enough, Richard,' said Peter. Dick glanced at Jane and smiled. Then he replied:

'She's responsible. You should see her sitting in Dad's seat and looking wise. She has turned Ned Brief's job into a listening job. She talks to him all day. Says she is learning from him, but I think he listens more than she does.'

'Never mind. I learn by talking. Mr. Weld, what do you think of the London Economic Conference?'

'I don't think it's a washout, Jane. It's time for international co-operation. We may not be altogether ripe for it. We must all set some things right in our respective countries first and then—'

'Exactly,' assented Jane, not interrupting Peter Weld, but supplying where he hesitated, 'Nationalism is our proper policy. We can't pull Europe's chestnuts out of the fire, especially those of France and her gold bloc. Let's tend to our own knitting.'

'Of course, my dear, of course,' Peter spoke brightly. 'But we can't stop there. We cannot continue our exaggerated nationalism. We must straighten up our own house, to be sure, but keep an eye out for the first promising moment to co-operate with other countries.'

'We must put on a real revolution at home,' said Hapwood. 'We're trying a little one. I'm for a big one.'

'All well and good in its time,' continued Peter. 'But part of our present little home revolution involves a reversal in our foreign policy. Part of our trouble lies in choked channels of trade, loss of foreign markets, obstacles to exchange of goods, credits, and monies. Only one tenth of our markets are foreign, I know, but that tenth covers nearly half of such products as corn, wheat, cotton, tobacco, which are our most important items of trade, and the very ones which affect our prosperity. We must preserve a just

balance between nationalism and internationalism. The trouble with extremists is they emphasize either the one or the other.'

'I can see,' replied Jane, 'that we must co-operate with other peoples. The world is very small. If it's true that our prosperity depends upon giving the masses purchasing power, it is equally true that it depends upon giving other nations purchasing power. Co-operation is a necessity.'

'Of course, Jane,' assented Peter, his face bright at her receptivity. 'Co-operation must begin at home, but not stay there. Individualism must limit itself. We must surrender our rugged individualism in order to live together in society. These two things are struggling for a new birth in the present revolution—for it is nothing less—first, co-operation in place of exaggerated individualism in America, and international co-operation instead of exaggerated nationalism toward the rest of the world.'

'Just what do you mean by individualism, say in business, in America, Mr. Weld?' asked Jane.

'Well, the right and the desire of every man to do as he pleases with what he calls his own. A man says, "This is my mill, I'll run it to suit myself. I own the machinery, I hire the help. I'll shut down when I please. I'll hire and fire as I please." That attitude is no longer defensible. Society has created the value of his property and his machinery. The gathering of large numbers of people together in cities, creates land values. A corner lot becomes valuable because society has elected to live near it. Society then has created the value, not the owner.'

'I can see that, too,' mused Jane, while Peter went on with his lesson in elementary economics, happy to be lecturing again to what he still hoped might prove an open mind.

'So with machinery, mills, raw materials. Their loca-

tion in a certain place, or their junction at a certain place, is the act of society in creating roads, railways, and water ways. No man can say he owns anything without reference to society; so no man can calmly declare, "I'll do what I please with my own." Tacitly we have long recognized certain limits to individualism, by hedging it in with various laws. Now we shall limit it much more sharply, create a more socialized business structure, and a more socialized state.'

'Then the human element enters into hiring and firing, doesn't it?' asked Jane.

'Surely. We've about recognized that. Hard to believe it's only a matter of twenty or thirty years since nearly everybody felt that labor was a commodity to be bought and sold in the cheapest market. Unions now set the pace as to their own wages. Collective bargaining. Everybody with any intelligence now recognizes its place. Labor is not a commodity, but flesh and blood, human souls, emotion, love, health, home. All this enters into labor. Society now sees that it must make labor prosperous, if society is to be prosperous; farmers prosperous, if business is to prosper. The whole of society must be lifted up together. So farewell individualism and the old slogan, "I'll do what I will with my own."



Richard listened to these old statements of social theory, with interested eyes on his sister's face. To a degree she, too, was familiar with them; but she had never got them through her head as clearly as she now seemed to do. Her brows knit; her big eyes burned. She took the scrutiny of Hapwood Powers with utter unconsciousness. He knew she was not oblivious to him. He had caught her studying

him earlier in the evening as Penny praised his conduct of the trial. He guessed her as two years younger than himself, but she was not. He gave his respect to her mental qualities and her physical strength and attractiveness. The two contrasted. By and by, Richard glanced at Hapwood, and caught the dark eyes fastened upon Jane. Then he looked from one to the other, and thought strange thoughts. Anyone would have said they could have great sons, these two — strong, brainy, tough sons. No fortune hunter, this man, Powers. A radical, almost an anarchist, but bearing the stamp of the approval of Peter Weld and Penny. An alliance in this quarter for Jane, and she'd become emancipated with a vengeance from the System. Hapwood Powers in control or indirect control, of the Sentinel, a sight for the gods and men of Seminole!

Penny stopped once, between kitchen and dining room, a dish of pretzels in her hand, and glanced from one to the other, from Jane to Happy, and Happy to Jane. A sudden fear and jealousy gripped at her heart. She felt blood recede from her face, then come charging back. Richard looked at her and smiled, while she smiled back with an air of unconcern. Richard sprang to relieve her of the dish which she did not yield to him but placed upon the table just as Hapwood suddenly exclaimed:

‘All the same, I can’t see how we’re going to avoid a violent revolution.’

Jane looked at him and said, ‘Why?’

‘Because I can’t see how twelve to fifteen millions of unemployed can be set to work. Each unemployed person means at least three dependents. That makes something like forty-five millions in want. Enough more are in precarious condition to bring the total of danger-ridden ones up to sixty millions, one half of the population. The few

who have money are not going to let go of it, or even risk it, to take care of the rest. Nothing short of compulsion will jar them loose.'

'But haven't we had a good deal of compulsion already, in the shape of depression?' Jane regarded him with heightening interest.

'Not enough. The depression has sobered many, but intensified the selfishness of many. Self-preservation, you know. First law.'

'How would you run a newspaper, these days?' Jane showed an interesting sense of responsibility. Hapwood laughed, as he replied:

'How wouldn't I! Only give me hold of one!'

'You'd soon lose all your subscribers, big bolshevik,' Penny cut in.

'What would you do?' persisted Jane.

'I think,' to their surprise Hapwood spoke slowly and without heat, 'I think I'd back the government a while. Only thing to do. Try to kindle a little blaze in the grass against the oncoming prairie fire. The success of these measures the administration is working at seems to me the only thing to stop a bloody upheaval. Already the big boys are writhing and twisting, plotting and planning to stop the experiments at recovery. If they get the upper hand, the old Fifty-three, or a new Fifty-seven, God help us all!'

When midnight came, Jane arose and said, 'Come on, Dick. We've kept these people up far too long. Mr. Weld must be very tired after his jury service, aren't you, Mr. Weld?'

'No. Not to speak of.'

Nevertheless the three guests moved toward the door, Peter and Penny following. Penny tried in vain to get a chance to say to Happy, 'Stay, won't you, a few moments.'

If he doesn't stay now, when can I ever get as near to him again? How can we ever continue something of the spell we began to weave in that little car coming home? To her blank astonishment and discomfiture, however, Jane looked in business-like fashion into the face of Hapwood Powers and said: 'Do you go our way, by any chance, Hapwood? Would you mind letting me ride with you? I'd like to talk just a few minutes more to you about what you've just said. Interests me mightily.'

'Delighted, I'm sure, Jane.' Happy took up her first name as quickly as she had taken up his. 'If you don't mind riding in a very small wagon, to a very loud and rather tinnish accompaniment.'

'Not at all. We can stop any time it drowns out conversation.'

Richard stood grinning at Jane's cool highhandedness. He could have stayed on a while, if Penny had given him the least opening, but she did not.

The accompaniment stopped within the arched porte-cochère of the Bronze palace, and the conversation went on for an hour. For a time Hapwood wondered if this girl meant to offer him a job as editor of the leading daily of Seminole. Very well, he would accept. He felt equal to the undertaking. And what a club he would wield, no matter what happened to the circulation. She did not, however, offer him the paper yet, but only plied him with questions, more or less penetrating and more or less amateurish, concerning his views about refashioning the social structure. Evident enough that she had given little study to the broad subject. And evident enough that at the beginning of that evening she thought the *Sentinel* a great success, her father a great success, and the policy he carried on in handling all his business a great success. Hapwood planted

huge lumps of dynamite and let them off under her complacency; and a rather staggered Jane finally bade him good-bye with a firm hand-clasp, and an expression of sincere gratitude, as well as called him familiarly 'Happy.'

'Good night, Jane.'

'Come and see me, Happy, here or at the office. Anytime. Let's talk some more.'

'Suits me, right down to the ground. I'll come.'

* *

Now came days of perplexity for Penelope Weld, not about her own feelings. They had been revealed to her as by a lightning flash on a dark night when she had heard Happy plead in court and when she rode in that little noisy car. Then a second flash had rendered them terrifyingly clear when she stood with that dish of pretzels and watched the interest of Jane and Happy in each other. Most of that fitful night following the trial she had remained awake analyzing those feelings. Stark and naked her heart now cowered ashamed before her own eyes, now unveiled its face and form to her vision with a sort of desperate bravado.

That's what you feel, Penny Weld. What of it? That's the man you've been seeking all this time. You've said to each of those you have thought you loved, before you got through you have said to them, 'I'm still looking for a man that can handle me.' You said that to Ned Engren after a solid year of betrothal. You said it to Sydney Swann, junior member of his firm, after a similar year, including a trip to New York which extended itself to Paris, in the piping days of Coolidge prosperity. In effect, you said it to Richard Bronze, though something of a deep affection of a totally different kind kept you from allowing him to get as close to you as these others in your quest for love.

That's what you feel, Penny Weld, why haven't you had sense enough to see it all these years? Both you and he have been foolish, stolid, deaf and dumb, all but blind. Or has he? Some one else in his life, no doubt. If not, then his heart is definitely open to impression. Think of the way he responded to Jane. Was their attraction purely socio-logical, economic, business-like? Yes, apparently; but how quickly such cool matter-of-fact attitudes grow into something else, something tender, something deep. They would make a handsome couple. They would serve the cause of social reform. Yes, Jane could be guided. For all her upbringing and the traditions behind her, Hapwood Powers had the strength to shape her. Though thirty-four, her experience in the big world where social storms raged and social forces at this very minute were making over civilization, maybe overthrowing it, Jane's experience still remained like that of a girl of twenty-five. Yes, it would seem a marriage of two currents of life that might make for social solutions. I'm perhaps ten years younger than Jane. I'm more beautiful than Jane, have a better figure than Jane and at least as good a mind. Should Penny stand aside and watch these two others run together? It was not in human nature; not in the nature at least of Penny Weld.

That's what you feel, Penny Weld, what are you going to do about it? To this practical girl, no matter how romantic, no matter how wildly emotional for all her maturity, perhaps because of her maturity, the practical question, what are you going to do about it, came as inevitably as breathing. That she would do something became a fore-gone conclusion.

Not until she had thought it all through, as she supposed coolly and judicially, but in reality with as fiery an emotional bias as ever burns in a human heart and brain, did she finally

sleep and then only for short periods. She dreamed vivid dreams of Happy's long muscular arms round her, his sensitive full lips upon hers. She dreamed of flying with him in the skies, dashing with him over green hills and through deep valleys. She dreamed the dreams of mature and powerful womanhood. Then she felt a flush of flame through her whole soul. This — oh, this is too much. Happy wouldn't want you if he knew. Yes he would, if he's the man I think him, experienced, worldly, reasonable. Yes he would. He'd understand everything in your innermost thoughts and life. Nothing if not understanding, this ripe man of the world who sympathizes with the weak and the strong, the hungry-mouthed and the hungry-hearted. I know he'd understand my passion for him. In her traditionally virginal chamber and her supposedly maiden reserve, she gave free rein to her most primitive thoughts and urges.

What are you going to do about it? There lay the question. She would go out hunting like the goddess, Diana, the huntress. She would hunt her man. He would never know, but she would stalk him. He would think it all accident, or believe he had brought it about, but she would bring him down with her spear, behind her shield of womanly modesty. She would bind him hand and foot, her willing captive. Jupiter would work with her, Jupiter and all Olympus, Venus among the rest. Didn't the gods know what love was like? Didn't they love mortals and mate with them? Couldn't they sympathize and understand? Oh, Penny, poor Penny, what raging wild thoughts possess you! How can you know that any of this tempest rages in him? Deluded, you may be, all deluded, as so many millions of misguided women have been before you and now? Very well, I'll put it to the test. He's the man that can

handle me, and I've been looking for him all my life, and here he's been through these years, close at hand. What has kept him away from me? His foolish, shortsighted belief that I belonged to the Bronzes. He ought to have known better, ought to have found out. I'll show him, the big blunderer!

A silent breakfast she had with Peter, silent and on her part slim.

'Acting on the English advice, Penny, that nobody ought to speak to anybody else before breakfast?'

She flashed a smile at him, and a monosyllable of assent. Then she busied herself, with an eye on Peter, as she got ready to go to the store. She kept a maid now, morning and evening; for Peter still went to the club at noon. When at last her father kissed her and said: 'You'll be late, Penny,' and retired to his den, she seized the telephone, dialed the office number of Evans, Collar, Liggett, Goldberg and Powers, and asked the switchboard for Mr. Hapwood Powers. If she had got him, she intended to hang up and leave him to swear. Since the girl at the office desk replied, 'Not come down yet,' as Penny had expected, she only casually inquired, 'What time does he usually arrive?' and received the satisfactory answer, 'Seldom before nine, but always by that time. Will you leave your number?' She then replied, 'No, thank you, we'll call him again.'

She then turned, in the telephone book, to his residence number, and ascertained the location of his apartment. She made a mental note of the route he probably followed in roaring and rattling down town each morning, glanced at her wrist watch, smiled with a resolute set of her jaw, put on hat and gloves, and proceeded on foot to the line of his probable communications.

Three mornings she did the same before her strategy received its reward. Why did she not resort to the simple expedient of inviting him to dinner, or asking Peter to? Because for years he had refused all such invitations. Why did she not personally write him a note or telephone him and ask him to take her to lunch? She might not be able to put into intelligible words the reasoning — if any — behind her line of procedure. The arranged accident, that suits woman's purpose far better, anyway this woman's. A man may go charging at his objective head on; not a woman. She makes flank attacks, ambuscades, surprises. She arranges accidents.

On the fourth morning it occurred, the accident. Penny happened to see Happy's car coming down the hill, happened to see and to hear. She happened to reach a bus-stop just at the right moment. The red light happened to stop the traffic, so that Happy's flivver drew up near the curb where she stood with anxiety on her countenance, alternately glancing at her wrist watch and looking eagerly back up the long street. A gay clubman in a shining big coupé happened to accost her with the delicate words, 'In a hurry, sister?' And Happy happened to hear, then to see her, and with a growl to spring out of his little wagon and rush toward the big coupé, just as the green light winked on, and the withered clubman, withered by those glacial eyes of Penny Weld, drove on. The line of cars behind Happy's deserted little rattler set up a conglomerate chorus of barks, screeches, and organ notes; but Happy, indignant and belligerent, paid not the slightest heed. He grabbed Penny's wrist, jerked her off the curb and growled fiercely:

'What the hell! Come on here. Damn dirty dog. Who was he? Know him? What's his name?'

Penny, having recognized the bounder, knew perfectly,

but swore she did not. All just happened. Diana, the huntress, had found her man.



Hapwood thought he asked Penny to have lunch with him that day in the grill room at Murcheson's; he didn't, however, for she asked him. He thought he suggested that he come by Swann's for her at five o'clock to protect her from designing clubmen who might accost her; he didn't, though, for she suggested the procedure. He thought he had, by skilful cross-examination, drawn from her the admission over the lunch table that she had never dreamed of entering the Bronze family, did not intend to dream of it, and would on no account enter any other family that she knew of, on this earth or any of its fellow planets; but he hadn't elicited the declarations; the evidence had developed freely, surprise evidence, brought out by the skill of the witness, not of the attorney. He thought he rather pushed himself upon the Welds for dinner that evening; he didn't; on the other hand, he was drawn by silken and invisible chords into that household for the first meal alone with them since the breakfast that morning long ago when the news had come of the death of Chris.

The forenoon and afternoon of that summer day when Happy thought he had done all these things so opposed to the rigid bounds he had set for himself in his relations with the Welds, he did the most scattered and ineffectual work he had done for many years. Books got misplaced, references would not come out right, papers mixed themselves up, and dictated words jumbled themselves almost without meaning. He fiddled while Seminole burned with the inordinate heat. He felt himself affected by the heat. 'A touch of sun,' as they used to say in the circles of handwork-

ing men he trained with a decade ago. He went down to the office drugstore for a bromo-selzer, and smiled as he drank it, for his head did not ache, only wool-gathered. He came back to his office, shut himself in, and pondered.

This Penny girl was going to his head. Why had he not realized long ago what a creature she was, how womanly, yet how young and resiliant? He had realized it. Why had he not followed her about day and night? Plainly because he had thought her mortgaged to Richard Bronze. Why had he not sought to obtain the mortgage? Evidently he had felt he couldn't, that the Bronze millions stood in his way, that she could so perfectly fit into the picture of the palace on Hunter's Hill, while he could not see her cooking in a little apartment for an impecunious lawyer and certain legal little brats. Children! He half stifled at the thought. Not the heat this time. He knew it now. Certainly the hands of his wrist watch never turned so slowly as on this July day, from nine o'clock to lunch time, and from lunch time to five o'clock.

After that, they went fast enough until at last Peter retired to his den and left the dark porch—for the moon did not rise until very late—to the young pair. Penny, however, could not stay still on any porch. The old wildness came surging back into all her being as she had not known it to do for years. An exhilaration swept her; the wind of her heart arose; she would have danced in the garden, barefoot on the dewy grass, as she had done when a girl. She felt that she had at last reached the summit of her life. Her mate had come, the one she had so long looked for, had come at last. He had not told her anything in words; but looks, bearing, the touch of fingers, big tough fingers, the whole manner of his absorbed and thoughtful gaze, unconsciously to him had told her all she wanted to know. She did not

care whether he knew or not, the big stupid; she doubted very much if he more than half guessed; but she knew, and she wanted to sing, dance, fling herself about, do cartwheels and handsprings, pose in the starlight and the coming moonlight.

The dinner for three, that's what brought her to this state. Peter had talked much about the stabilization of national currencies, about the gold standard, about the fetish of gold, the golden calf and the 'crucifixion of mankind on a cross of gold.' Hapwood answered abstractedly, and tried to hold up his end, while Penny chuckled and made irrelevant remarks, jibed at the two men in a wilful way that suggested the presence of Ned Engren and other schoolboys in the long ago. Peter seemed all oblivious to her symptoms, and those of Hapwood Powers. He looked at his plate, out of the window at the great shrub, the Rose of Sharon, in the back garden, bursting into its pink and white blooms as big as hollyhocks and far more delicate, and then furtively from Penny to Happy and from Happy to Penny, who gazed so often into each other's eyes while simulating interest in deflation versus inflation. That is, Happy did the gazing while Penny did the eluding of his gaze, with laughing gayety and impudent sarcasm. At last Peter fell silent, his reverend face a study in bewilderment struggling with pleased contemplation. Perhaps his conclusions led to his early retirement to his den 'to begin that article.'

Something had been said on the porch about marriage. How could two so ripe as these for the great event avoid expression in words? Penny had admitted the greater experience of Happy, but had uttered decided views of her own as to the opportunities, joys, and obligations of matrimony, and finished with the declaration:

'Whoever marries me must marry Peter, too. He's my

child by a former marriage.' Then before any comment could be ventured, she sprang up from her little porch chair and said, 'Come on. I'm going to the back garden. Come or stay, as you please; but I'm going.'



'Let's go somewhere and dance, Happy. Don't you dance, don't you feel like dancing?'

Happy had followed her round the house to the back garden, followed in a pleased and perplexed dream. Here was a new Penny revealed to his now fully opened eyes, a capricious and vibrant Penny, a perverse and altogether alluring Penny. So many sides to her. In the little he had seen of her hitherto, she had seemed out of reach. Now just as he was about to receive her in his arms, and on his breast, she eludes him, plays antics with him, dances away from him. A puzzling Penny, and a perfect darling of a Penny. Now she turned and faced him with her question, 'Don't you feel like dancing?'

'I feel like—like hugging you!' With that, standing under the tall Rose of Sharon, he gathered her into his arms, crushed her with force greater than she had ever known against a breast that seemed to her terribly broad and peacefully protecting. One arm of hers went up, up, ever so far up to get round his neck, and she felt those lips again, full, so full! She tried to smile as she thought of her girlish comparison when first she felt those lips on her cheek, 'like two rolls of dentist's gauze.' Now they pressed not upon her cheek but upon her own mouth, and not soft but savage, hurting her with such delicious pain. A long time they stood thus, and then gasping, and dabbing a handkerchief to her lips to see if they bled, and not caring whether they did or not, she thrust him away, both panting.

‘I love you, Penny, I love you, love you. I’ve loved you since God knows when.’

‘But you loved another woman in the meantime.’

‘Thought I did. But I didn’t.’

‘What did you marry her for?’

‘Thought it appropriate. I was a wild-eyed Communist. She was a wild-haired one. I just felt a sort of impulse—maybe biological urge. I’m pretty strong, Penny, that way, every way.’

‘Yes, you men all think you’re so strong every way. Makes you all so sure of yourselves!’

‘Certainly. Self-respect, you know. It underlies all life.’

‘You told her you loved her, too, didn’t you?’

‘I thought I did. Maybe in a way I did, but—but nothing to this. Great God, I’ve never known anything like this.’

‘Loved nobody since—’

‘Of course—I’m no different, Penny. I’m—well, I’ll say I’m average. But I’ll tell you this, darling, I’ve never told any other woman I loved her, never tried to fool anybody. I never even told my—my wife I loved her, body, mind, heart, soul, as I’m loving you and telling you, with every ounce of strength that’s in me. Oh, Penny, this hurts! This is the divinest, painfullest, happiest moment of my life.’

‘You’ve been pretty smooth, covering up your tracks.’

‘How do you know?’

‘The Sentinel tried to get you. Dick told me.’

‘Why didn’t you warn me?’

‘Knew there was no use. You’re too smooth for them.’

‘Nobody so clever there’s not somebody a little bit cleverer. But I’ve never done anything I’m ashamed of. Never took what I hadn’t a right to, and never hurt anybody.’

‘You wouldn’t.’

‘And you, Penny?’

‘Well, I’ve thought I was in love before—’

‘I don’t mean that. I don’t care to know about that. I mean now, do you love me, Penny?’

‘Don’t you want to know about my life, too?’

‘Of course, some time. What you want me to. I don’t give a damn about anything, though, except now—now—right now. Do you—’

‘I ought to tell you about Ned—’

‘Not now.’

‘And about Sydney Swann—’

‘Not now.’

‘And don’t you even want to know about Richard Bronze?’

‘Not now.’

‘Then I’m going to dance! If you don’t take me somewhere where there’s music, I’m going to dance right here. I’m going to pull my dress off—look the other way—and my shoes, and dance under these bushes and these trees, just in my slip. No, no, don’t do that again!’

He reached for her, and couldn’t touch her. He followed, and she did not run, but sinuously slid by the ends of his fingers. He sprang toward her, and she was not there. She laughed at him and with him, soft, low laughter that came from deep down in an evidently ecstatic breast. She kept saying, ‘Take me to Murcheson’s grill, take me to the Strand gardens, take me to Far Ripple; I must dance. I give you fair warning. I’ll dance there or—I’ll dance here, and then you’ll not touch me again tonight.’ The new Penny intoxicated him.

‘If I take you to Far Ripple right now, will you let me kiss you again, take you in my arms again?’

‘Yes,’ and she met him more than half way.

The neighborhood church chimes rang three when the little flivver came rattling up the street to the Weld bungalow. Neither Happy nor Penny heard or knew the hour or cared to know. Happy had tried all evening to bring Penny to close quarters in conversation over the terrace table at Far Ripple in the full moonlight and to the syncopated sophistication of the orchestra, the yearning tunes of the period, *Blue Prelude*, *Mad About the Girl*, *Stormy Weather*. But Penny could not be cornered. She dodged all seriousness, all reference to the future, to plans and purposes, and made Happy dance. To her surprise he moved gracefully, easily, and she fitted most comfortably into his arms, her chin about on a level with the top button of his white twill waist-coat. She had seldom danced with a man six feet one, and never with one who seemed so strong. When he tried to discuss their standing with each other, she only cried:

‘I want you to be happy. You’re called “Happy.” Now be happy. I’m going to make you happy. That’s enough for tonight, isn’t it? You look so solemn right this minute. Now stop it! Be happy. Begin right now. You’re solemn too much of the time. From this on, you’ve got to be “Happy” Powers. That’s enough about the future. Dance up! If you don’t, I’ll get out beyond those lights and turn handsprings, I swear I will!’

Now as she almost literally danced up to the steps of the porch at home, Hapwood, taking long strides as he tried in vain to keep up with her and expecting to kiss her once more for goodnight, Peter arose from a chair and met her.

‘Why Peter Weld, why aren’t you abed?’

‘Old night hawk, Penny. I wasn’t waiting up for you. I know better than that. I just got to thinking.’

‘Well, stop it. No more thinking for you. You for bed, Peter Weld. I’ll take you upstairs. Goodnight, Happy. Kiss him goodnight, Peter,’ and she laughed in a way that put purpose into her nonsense, and revealed to her father the state of her mind and heart better than any amount of explanation could have done.

‘Goodnight, Hapwood.’

‘Goodnight, Mr. Weld.’

‘Goodnight, Penny.’

‘Goodnight, Happy. I’ll be seeing you in the morning at the bus stop.’

‘No. Right here. I’ll be outside, sitting in my wagon from six o’clock on. Come out when you’re ready.’

‘That means up at five. What time is it, Peter? Three? Two hours sleep for you, Happy? No. Come at eight forty-five. I’ll be ready. You’re due at your office at nine, I hear.’

‘You hear? How?’

‘Never mind. I’ll be on time. Goodnight, Happy—dear.’

‘Goodnight, Penny, darling.’

Peter had subsided into a large wicker rocking chair, his porch chair.

‘Aren’t you going to bed, Daddy?’

‘Not yet, though you should. But just five minutes, Penny dear. I’ll not keep you longer.’

‘The rest of the night, if you like, Peter. What is it?’

‘I can see how it is with you and Hapwood. I saw it at dinner. Anybody could see it, couldn’t help but see it.’

‘No secret to keep, Daddy.’

‘You’re going to marry him, and you’ll do it quick. Perhaps tomorrow. You should be quick.’

‘Why, he hasn’t asked me. I never thought of that till

just now. I must call him back and tell him to ask me, to tell me his intentions are honorable.'

' Anyway, dear child, you love him.'

' Exactly so, Peter. I just found it out four days ago. Isn't it funny? I've been in love with him for — let me see — thirteen years. Unlucky number. I must hurry up and love him a year more.'

' Since you saw him when you were a little girl?'

' No. Almost a grown lady, fifteen, to be exact. And I kept his cigarette stub in a match-box, and you thought I'd been smoking. Wait, Peter, I'll get it. It must be still there. It was at housecleaning time last spring. Wait, Peter,' and the stately Penny, at times so languid and dignified, now went with lightest feet up the stairs, drew out the dresser drawer, reached far back behind her belongings and brought out the once highly red and blue match-box, discolored with age into soft purples, burnt umber, old rose, like the colors of a very antique Turkish rug, and came at childish speed back down the stairs and out to Peter. She switched on a porch light as she came, and sitting on the arm of Peter's chair, she slid the box open laughing softly and saying:

' Look, Peter. That's all that's left. Just a heap of brown and black dust.' She stirred it with her finger until it crumbled formless, and held it out to her father, murmuring, ' Thirteen years. In love all that time with one man and not knowing it. Trying hard to love other men and not knowing what was the matter. Can you conceive it, Peter?'

' Easily, dear child. Yes.' Peter sat silent a moment as Penny slowly closed the box, folded it in both hands, looked out into the darkness with wide violet-blue eyes, and then arose to turn out the light.

' You'll be marrying him, Penny? And if I know you, it'll be tomorrow or next day. No use to delay.'

‘Whatever he wants, Daddy.’

‘Of course he’ll want marriage. He wouldn’t—’

‘I suppose so. But whatever he wants. He wants me and I want him, just like Adam and Eve in the garden.’

‘I know, Penny. And—and whatever you do, it’s all right with me. But I think he’ll want marriage. He’s not a Communist any more. And even Communists believe in marriage.’

‘Well, marriage can’t be called one of our finest works of art. We’ve been experimenting for thousands of years, ten thousand, a hundred thousand, and we’re about where the soviet is, with about the same percentage of divorces.’

‘Yes, but marriage is the best we’ve got so far.’

‘I know it, Peter. Unsatisfactory most of the time, not perfect but the best we’ve got. Maybe in a socialized state, we’ll work out something better. I haven’t discussed it with Happy. Yes, Peter. Of course it will be marriage.’

‘Then, Penny dear, I was thinking about myself. We all think about ourselves, you know. Can’t help it. I’ve long felt I’d like to live at the club. Wouldn’t have to ride back and forth in the noisy cars. So much easier, and I’m getting on in years—’

‘Hush, Peter Weld.’

‘You two could have this house. It’s already in your name, did you know that?’ Penny shook her head. ‘Yes, I deeded it to you thirteen years ago, when Chris went away. I felt he’d never come back, not to live here. And it’s just the right size for a young married couple. My den could be his study at home.’

‘Hush, Peter Weld.’ This time Penny put her hand over his mouth, and had it not been for the darkness, he could have seen tears springing into her eyes, though he could not

have felt the sweet sting of them in her throat. He pushed her hand away and kept on:

‘And you’ll have a baby right away. You should at your age; and you know a child would disturb me. I couldn’t work.’

‘Hush, Peter Weld.’ Penny began crying in earnest now, and laughing low and soft at the same time. ‘You know perfectly well you’d have that baby in your arms eight hours out of the twenty-four, if I’d let you. Of course I’ll have babies, plenty of babies, twins if I can get them —’

‘But Penny, you’ll soon be thinking of the store again, after the first one is a few months old. Business women always do.’

‘Not this one. No sir. I’ll be through with business, with that big man to look after me. I’m your own daughter, Peter, and you’ve taught me enough to know my place — make a home — have babies — replenish the earth. Now I’m going to show you the terrible fruit of your teaching. Ten years of baby-bearing, and I’ll be ready for the mossy stone, and Happy for another wife and another brood, like the Pilgrim Fathers.’

‘Hush, Penny Weld! ’

‘All right, Daddy, we’ll both shut up and go to bed. No use counting your husbands till they’re hatched. He’s still more than half anarchist and maybe he doesn’t believe in marriage and babies.’

‘Oh, yes he does, Penny. Every man does, down deep in his heart. And with such a woman as you — yes, Penny, he’ll want you all to himself, undivided, exclusive. And I know the club will be the best place for me. I always said I wished some day to live in an old man’s home and not be dependent on any child or relative.’

‘Well, you can’t have your wish in that particular. You’re

going to stay right here as long as I do. And wherever I go, you go, understand?

‘But Penny, listen to reason, I’ve lived a long life, so much longer than you. I’ve known so many couples and their troubles over in-laws. They tell me — young men at the club, and the neighbors hereabout. In-laws make such a lot of the troubles of married life. I’ve resolved not to do the same. I’ll go to the club.’

‘You’ll do no such thing, Peter, I tell you. There’ll be no marriage without you, that’s final. You’re going to stay with me. I know that if it came to a choice between you and him, you’ve always shown me a young person should choose his mate. And I agree. But it has not come to such a choice and it never will. I can have you and him, too, and I mean to have you both. That’s settled, signed, sealed and delivered. And that’s what Happy wants.’

‘How do you know what he wants? You said you hadn’t talked about marriage, he hasn’t asked you to marry him?’

‘No, that’s right, he hasn’t; but he will and he’ll do whatever I want, just as I’ll do whatever he wants. But, Peter, I served notice on him early this evening that whoever wishes to marry me must marry Peter, too. He understands, and still he wants me. I tell you he wants us both. He’s as much in love with you as with me.’



Two or three mornings later, however, when Penny had gone away with Happy toward the city, and the maid had cleaned up and left, Peter got out an old suit case and a big black gladstone bag, a little steamer trunk, as well as a couple of brief-cases, and had put in two hours packing clothes, a few books and pictures, and sundry manuscripts, saying to himself, ‘I can take the rest later.’ An old cabinet

photograph of Penny's mother, browned round the edges with time, snapshots and large pictures of Penny at all phases of her growth up to her present splendid womanhood, a small one and a large one of Chris, the latter taken at graduation two years before he left Seminole, these he placed in a brief-case and carried in his hand. He had made his arrangements at the club by telephone; so all that remained was to call a cab and transport himself and luggage to his new home. He left a note for Penny, in case he should be unable to reach her at the store. He said:

‘Dear Penny: Please let me have my way. I’m a crotchety old man, used to doing as I please and being independent. I’m going to the club but I’ll really be with you just as much, honestly I will. I’m just consulting my own desires, being selfish. Haven’t I the right to continue selfish as always and go my own way? I love you better than anything in the world, Penny dear, but — I suppose you can’t understand, but I want to live my own life for the short time left to me. I’ll see you tonight. I’ll come out a little while. If you and Happy aren’t there when I come, it will be all right. I may wait for you. Lovingly, Peter.’

It proved well that he left the note, for he could not reach Penny by telephone from the club. She had left word not to be summoned from the all day conference over the fall stock. For when she bounded into the house with Happy at her heels at five-fifteen and began calling: ‘Peter, Peter, Peter Weld!’ received no answer, and dashed into the den to find it rifled of so much of its surface contents, and was just about to rush upstairs, her heart in her mouth, she discovered the envelope addressed to her leaning against the library lamp. When she began reading, mist quickly covered her eyes, then tears, and soon the tears ran down her cheeks.

Brushing them away, regardless of her make-up, she gave a sob, and handed the letter to Hapwood, saying:

‘The dear stubborn old Daddy. He can’t fool me, Happy. Think I can’t see straight through him? He wants to get out of our way. And between you and me, he’s just a wee bit jealous, the old rascal! You see he’s had me for so long, keeping house for him, looking after him. He thinks he can look after himself. But he can’t. He needs me, and—and I need him. You can understand, can’t you, Happy? You really want him with us, don’t you?’

‘Good God, yes. He’s part of you, Penny. It’s a liberal education to be with him. Haven’t I sought him out all these years?’

‘More than you have me, Happy.’

‘Don’t cry, Penny. I’d have sought you, if I’d known. You know well I would. Please don’t cry, Penny. We’ll go right after him.’

‘I knew you’d say that, darling. I’m—I’m just crying to think of what’s going on in his heart, has gone on for several days and nights. Don’t you know he’s desolate, and lonely, lonely for me. We don’t want a love that would shut him out, do we, Happy?’

‘Hell, no. Come on, let’s go after him.’

‘You darling Happy! I know every fiber of you already. Kiss me, Happy.’

‘Sure.’ Kiss, kiss, ten kisses. ‘But come on, we’re wasting time, and leaving him in loneliness. Let’s go on and bust up that loneliness. I can’t stand it, can you? Damn it, you’ll have me crying in a minute.’ And Happy had need to blow his nose.

In ten minutes they reached the club, approached the desk, and inquired for Peter Weld. Two minutes more, and he came down to the main clubroom. Five minutes more and

they had him in the elevator on the way to his room to repack. There stood the treasured photographs, on the bleak dresser, symbols of all the loves in his life. There lay the meager choice of books and the beloved manuscripts in neat piles on the bare clubroom writing table. A few clothes hung in the closet, and an assortment of linen showed in a half-open drawer.

Penny almost broke down when she saw the pathetic results at an attempt to settle in. She went to the window and looked out a moment, wiping the corners of her eyes, while Peter pointed about him with a show of pride at his conveniences, his high location, his wonderful view and air, and his private bath. She bore it as long as she could, then moved swiftly across the room, threw her arms about Peter's neck, dropped her forehead on Peter's breast and sobbed unrestrained, unashamed. Peter patted her and said:

‘Why, Penny. What’s the matter? What’s the matter? Oh, Penny. Stop it. I can’t bear it. What d’you mean, Penny?’

When she at last gained a measure of control, she answered him: ‘It’s you, Peter. Your fault, Peter. You’re breaking my heart!’ Then she wept again.

‘Why, Penny! What are you talking about? I wouldn’t break your heart. I — why, what can you mean?’

After another struggle for self-possession, she managed to answer him: ‘I mean I can’t stand the way you’re acting. You’re stubborn, Peter; and you don’t know it, but you’re jealous. Jealous of Happy!’

‘Jealous?’ Peter looked genuinely astonished. ‘Jealous? Why, child, you’re crazy. I never was jealous — well, not for years.’

‘Just the same, you’re jealous. You pride yourself on seeing into other people’s hearts, and helping them straighten

out their kinks; and you can't look into your own and see that you're a jealous, stubborn, dear old Daddy. And I won't have it!'

'Farthest thing from my thoughts! Jealous! I — I merely am selfish. Like to be independent.'

'You're not selfish. You've always been unselfish for all the rest of us, family, neighbors, anybody and everybody. Well, you've got to go on being unselfish for us — Happy and me. When I tell you that I'll be desperately unhappy if ever you refuse to live with me, that it will break my heart, will you agree to pack up right away, and come on home with us? You'll break Happy's heart, too, if you persist in being stubborn — and jealous.'

'Jealous! Stop talking nonsense.' But anyone could see that Peter had lost some self-confidence and was digging round inside of himself to see if he could find any root of jealousy. He yielded as in a daze, allowed his things to be repacked, taken downstairs, and put in a truck to be sent home. Then he got into the little flivver with Happy and Penny and drove to the little cottage where he had lived for thirty years. As they mounted the steps together to the familiar porch, Penny kept 'riding' him, as he had told Chris he loved to be ridden by her:

'Yes, and precipitate! You no more than hear that Happy and I love each other, than you figure out that we're going to be married tomorrow and that Happy's going to move right in on us.'

'Well, at your age, I don't think you'll wait long. I wouldn't advise it. Tomorrow or next day, or something like that.' Peter stood on the little porch and looked about, sighed and smiled.

'Why, Daddy, how precipitate you are. Happy hasn't even asked me.'

‘Not — not asked you — you mean not asked you to marry him?’

‘No, he hasn’t.’

‘Well,’ said Happy, ‘that’s so. I haven’t had a chance. She’s kept me going every minute I’ve been with her. But I ask you now, Penny. Will you and Peter marry me?’

‘I don’t know. We might. I’ll ask Peter.’

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